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President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The President: I declare open the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I warmly welcome everyone to this high-level meeting, which will focus on efforts undertaken and opportunities to strengthen the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, is held in accordance with resolution 70/262, of 27 April 2016, and takes place under agenda item 65, entitled "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace".

In 1945, the world had seen too much horror. That could not continue, and therefore a change was made. That is why the United Nations was established. From the start, peace was at its core. The first line of the Charter of the United Nations commits us to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In some ways, we have met that commitment. No other world war has taken place since then. However, in many other ways, we have not. We have waited too long to act. We have not been there when people needed us. We could have done more to respond to conflicts and more to prevent them from happening at all.

In 2016, we decided to take a new approach. The General Assembly, together with the Security Council, adopted what we now call the sustaining peace resolutions (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)). We committed to acting earlier, faster and better to prevent the suffering that conflict brings. That was the easier part. The challenge came in making the approach a reality. That is why we are here now — to assess the progress we have made so far and plan how we can do better going forward. I must say that we are meeting at a crucial time.

We need that new approach more than ever before. We need it for the people in Syria, who are in the eighth year of a brutal conflict. We need it for the people in South Sudan, who have known more war than peace in their country's lifetime. We need it for people facing unending conflict, from Yemen and Libya to Somalia and Afghanistan. We need it for all of us here today. We all see the warning signs: rising intolerance, hate speech, escalating rhetoric and increasing disregard for the principles and systems that we have spent seven decades building.

Today I will start us off by focusing on five areas that demand our urgent attention.

The first is prevention, as it is our top priority. To that end, we need greater mediation and diplomacy at the local level, which will require quick and efficient responses to stop local disputes from becoming violent. It is also needed at the national level. The United Nations

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must do more to support the prevention of hunger and it must also be ready to step in through its own mediators and good offices, if required. Mediation and diplomacy are also needed at the regional level, because we have seen that regional and subregional actors are critical to preventing escalating tensions. Finally, they are needed right here, on the international stage. The United Nations can offer a space for negotiations of every kind. We must do more to use it. We need a drive for diplomacy, and the United Nations must be the engine room.

Prevention also means addressing conflict at its roots before it turns deadly. We must make our societies more resilient. We must respond to early warning signs. We need strong institutions, sustainable development, access to justice and respect for human rights. Perhaps in the past we did not associate those efforts with prevention, but they are all drivers of peace. We must invest in them. We cannot let incentives for violence outweigh incentives for peace.

My second point this morning is that we need to connect the dots within the system of the United Nations itself. We need to be much more coherent, which also means improving coherence across the three United Nations pillars and areas of work. We can no longer talk only about humanitarian work, human rights work or peacekeeping; nor can we view the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a stand-alone framework. That demands additional links, cooperation and coherence. I have seen that in person. In March, I visited indigenous communities in the Colombian town of Totoró. There I did not see merely a United Nations programme. I saw a real partnership. I saw real commitment to peace, from the United Nations and the Colombian Government to local leaders. I look forward to hearing about the lessons learned from President Santos Calderón, whom I am honoured to welcome here today.

A third area for further action is partnerships. Sustaining peace cannot be a United Nations export. It is not something that we can make here and deliver to countries and societies. We can only succeed in partnership, first and foremost, with national actors. If we do not listen to them and go in with our own plans and ideas, we will fail. Regional and subregional partners are also crucial. In 2017, the constitutional crisis in the Gambia showed us how regional action can prevent escalation. I am delighted that we can welcome President Barrow here today to give us his country's national perspective. Civil-society actors are another key ingredient to sustaining peace. We need their experiences and expertise, and they need far more support from us. Lastly, we must engage more with the private sector and financial institutions. Innovative partnerships are crucial. They can create opportunities. They can build capacity. They can attract investment.

That brings me to my fourth point, with regard to financing. Additional investment in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace is vital. And, as if the moral case were not strong enough, we also have a solid financial one to make. The recent World Bank and United Nations report, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict,* informs us that for every $1 spent on prevention, up to $7 could be saved over the long term. That means that instead of being spent on conflict response, $7 could go towards actually developing and advancing societies. Yet we continue not to invest enough in prevention, and one of our main funding mechanisms for sustaining peace, the Peacebuilding Fund, is struggling to reach its target of $500 million. There are concrete proposals on the table, and I am glad that draft resolution A/72/L.49, which we plan to adopt, provides us with a mandate to consider them in more depth.

My final point concerns the need for inclusion. We saw things from the wrong perspective for too many years. We believed that the power to make and build peace lay only in the hands of a few people — the elite, politicians, diplomats and, always, men. Women were seen as victims, and young people as soldiers or agitators. But we are beginning to tear down that narrative. Some of the people in this Hall are doing it with their own two hands. For example, Visaka Dharmadasa helped to save peace talks in Sri Lanka from breaking down through communication and confidence-building. She is not a victim of conflict; she is a champion of peace. Or take the case of Ilwad Elman, who works with survivors of gender-based violence and former child soldiers in Somalia. She is younger than many people here, but we will all be learning from her. With regard to peace, we need more inclusion. We need more actors at the table, and I do not mean standing beside it just for the sake of optics. They must be sitting right at the table, talking, participating and adding their value.

We are making progress. A few years ago, no one had ever heard of sustaining peace. Then, in 2016, we made a firm commitment, and by the end of this week, we will have adopted another draft resolution to keep up our momentum. We also have the report and concrete proposals from the Secretary-General. Moreover, this morning our meeting on sustaining peace has seen the highest levels of attendance at the United Nations this year. But let me be absolutely clear — that is not enough. The stakes are too high. The effects of conflicts are too inhuman. The warning signs of further outbreaks are all too visible. And disregard of our most fundamental principles is too frequent. That is why we need to go beyond resolutions, statements and words. We need to put all of our cards on the table here this week, and we need to recommit to this new approach to peace. I thank everyone for being here to do precisely that.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I thank the General Assembly for this opportunity to renew our joint commitment to building and sustaining peace. I welcome Members' high-level attention accorded to this issue at a key moment for our collective efforts and at a time when peace is fragile and at risk in many places around the world.

Two years ago, the General Assembly and the Security Council sent an unequivocal message by adopting the ambitious twin resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, pledging to work better together to sustain peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions. Those resolutions stress that although Governments have the primary responsibility for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, we can all do more to build peaceful and resilient societies. Two years on, it is time to look at progress and forge a common path ahead. No one can doubt the many benefits of globalization, including the integration of the world's economies, the expansion of trade, the reduction in poverty and improvements in living standards and stunning advances in technology. But at the same time, we must recognize that in some fundamental ways, our world is going backwards.

More countries are experiencing violent conflict than at any time in nearly three decades. Record numbers of civilians are being killed or injured by explosive weapons in urban areas. Record numbers of people are on the move, displaced by violence, war or persecution. We are witnessing horrific violations of human rights and increases in nationalism, racism and xenophobia. Inequalities are increasing. It is possible for entire regions, countries and communities to find themselves isolated from progress and left behind in terms of growth. Women and girls face discrimination of all kinds. Those are all indications that we need greater unity and courage to ease the fears of the people whom we serve, to set the world on track to a better future, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. I hope that this high-level meeting will build greater momentum to implement the resolutions passed in 2016 towards sustaining peace.

The central message of my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) is that we need to enhance the coherence of international efforts in support of national Governments and their people. The scale and nature of the challenge that we face call for closer strategic and operational partnerships among all key stakeholders, based on national priorities and policies. Those key stakeholders include Governments, the United Nations, other international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, women's groups, youth organizations and the private sector.

To achieve greater coherence, we are strengthening partnerships around all our efforts and at every stage along the peace continuum, from conflict prevention and resolution to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development. My High-level Advisory Board on Mediation is aimed at building on the expertise of skilled diplomats to support action for peace around the world, strengthening our relationships with regional organizations, non-governmental groups and others who are engaged in this critical activity for peace.

Last month, I launched the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, to mobilize greater support for stronger and safer United Nations peacekeeping missions. One of its important elements is strengthening relationships with all our partners and stakeholders, including the countries that generously contribute not only troops, but also police, equipment and other resources.

We aim to strengthen support to the Peacebuilding Commission, the platform that brings together partnerships to enhance coherence among all stakeholders, by revitalizing the Peacebuilding Support Office, which the reform would strengthen. We further aim to strengthen the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office's role across the United Nations system, which will increase our capacity to facilitate transition in post-conflict situations.

All those efforts are beginning to bear fruit. In Liberia, for example, the transition from the United Nations Mission in Liberia to our country team demonstrated a new level of United Nations-wide coordination and preparation. But clearly, as the President said, more remains to be done, both in countries at risk and at the United Nations. Sustaining peace will be realized only through committed, inclusive national ownership that considers the needs of the most marginalized, including women, young people, minorities and people with disabilities. Women are critically important peacebuilders and I am strongly committed to their inclusion in all peacebuilding processes. The United Nations seven-point action plan on women's participation in peacebuilding sets out measures to increase financing for gender-responsive peacebuilding, expand women's access to decision-making and improve gender-sensitive analysis and planning. Gender-related issues must remain at the forefront of this debate, and our commitment to parity is very much in line with it.

I also warmly welcome the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see A/72/761), which will have an important role in shaping our engagement with young women and men. It is beyond time to recognize the major contribution young people can make to peace and security. I hope you will support my reforms in this area aimed at putting young people in charge and taking full advantage of their knowledge, ideas and initiatives.

Above all, sustainable, inclusive development, deeply rooted in respect for all human rights — economic, social, cultural, civil and political — is the world's best preventive tool against violent conflict and instability. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our common blueprint for a more peaceful, stable, resilient group of societies. Sustainable development is an end in itself. But it also makes a critical contribution to preventing conflict. Investing in sustained peace means investing in basic services, bringing humanitarian and development agencies together, building effective and accountable institutions, protecting human rights, promoting social cohesion and diversity and moving to sustainable energy. Quality education, decent jobs and training for young people are fundamental. We need a holistic approach that prioritizes prevention and addresses the root causes of conflict by integrating peace, sustainable development and human rights.

(*spoke in French*)

My report contains proposals for more effective and efficient United Nations system-wide support for Member States through reform of the development, management, and peace and security sectors. I am determined to prepare the United Nations for the world of tomorrow. For that, its financing is an essential aspect. If no progress is made with regard to the financing of peacebuilding activities, the efforts we have made to save lives, stabilize the situation in countries in crisis, relieve suffering and protect vulnerable people are likely to be in vain.

Over the past decade, the international community has spent $233 billion on humanitarian response, peacekeeping and refugee reception. We need to invest much more in prevention, because it is efficient and economical and, most importantly, because it saves lives.

The Peacebuilding Fund has already demonstrated its ability to assist national partners; support the transition to peace and stability; enhance coherence by distributing resources through more than 25 United Nations agencies, Governments and other partners and align its objectives with those of the international financial institutions and other actors with a remarkable multiplier effect. The Fund is responsive and can react quickly to an impending crisis. It acts as a catalyst and can mobilize funds from other sources. It funds projects that no one else is willing to invest in and promotes diversity and inclusion, as many of its programmes support women and young people. I ask again that the Fund's resources be increased to $500 million a year.

In my report, I propose several ways to increase, restructure and prioritize funding for peacebuilding activities through voluntary, regular and innovative funding. I hope that States will give these proposals the attention they deserve. In my peace and security reforms, I also propose increasing the number of permanent posts in the Peacebuilding Support Office by 50 per cent, which can be done without incurring additional costs, thanks to the savings produced by the reform's efficiency gains. The strengthening of the Peacebuilding Support Office proposed in the reform and the increase in the resources allocated to the Peacebuilding Fund must be the link between our work for peace and security and all our other activities, through the sharing of tools and methods and the strengthening of partnerships.

(spoke in English)

I am encouraged that at a time of discord and divisions, Member States have come together around the crucial endeavour of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Tomorrow I will address the Security Council on the same issue. We need the strong support of both the Security Council and the Assembly to build and sustain peace across the continuum from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development, as I mentioned at the beginning of my statement.

I welcome draft resolution A/72/L.49, on my report, and hope for continued discussions on strengthening the peacebuilding architecture so as to overcome fragmentation and work together effectively and coherently. I look forward to our discussions at this high-level meeting, and to our continued work together to fulfil one of the primary purposes of the United Nations: building and maintaining global peace and security.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Before proceeding further, and as indicated in my letter dated 13 April 2018, I would now like to consult members on inviting the following speakers to make statements: Ms. Michelle Yeoh, actress, producer and United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador; Mr. Ishmael Beah, United Nations Children's Fund Advocate for Children Affected by War; Ms. Joy Onyesoh, President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Nigeria; and Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, and without setting a precedent, to invite these speakers to make statements in this meeting?

It was so decided (decision 72/555).

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Michelle Yeoh, actress, producer and United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador.

Ms. Yeoh (United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador): I thank you, Mr. President, for granting me the honour to address the Assembly this morning in my role as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). I thank the Secretary-General for sharing his inspiring vision.

Over the past couple of years as the UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, I have met many men, women and children who have been forced from their homes, are struggling to make ends meet and have been left behind. In many cases, their suffering was caused by violence, conflict or crisis. As the Secretary-General pointed out, more countries have experienced conflict over the past few years than at any time in the past three decades. What is more, those conflicts are becoming more drawn-out, complex and deadly as civilians are no longer only casualties but have become targets.

An estimated 65.6 million people have now been forcibly displaced from their homes, primarily due to violence and conflict. The number of refugees in the world has nearly doubled over the past decade. Adding to the tragedy and heartbreak is the fact that more than half of the world's refugees are children, many of whom have been separated from their families. If the current trend continues, by 2030 — the year by which we hope to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals — more than half of the world's poor will be living in countries affected by high levels of violence.

Violent conflict affects men and women in very different ways. Too often, women and girls fall prey to sexual and gender-based violence. They become victims of human trafficking, sexual slavery and forced marriage. For children and young people, the devastating long-term effects of suffering through violence and conflict can lead to psychological trauma and have a negative impact on their cognitive and social development. It can also put them at risk of perpetrating violence, or becoming victims of violence later in life. The human cost of war and violence is tragic, devastating and simply too high; but the financial costs, born by the affected regions and the international community, are also enormous and wide-ranging and have long-term consequences.

Many of the efforts and resources of the international community, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars, have been dedicated to responding to crises once they have already broken out. What we should be doing instead is preventing conflict in the first place. It could save countless lives and billions of dollars. The Charter of the United Nations establishes the prevention of violent conflict as the overriding objective of the United Nations, with the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Conflict prevention is our mandate, and we need to be able to fulfil it. Rebalancing the United Nations focus from reaction to prevention is at the heart of the sustaining peace agenda.

I thank the Secretary-General for declaring prevention to be the priority of the United Nations. That includes not just the prevention of violent conflict, for which the concept of sustaining peace is critical, but also the prevention of crises and human suffering, including through actions such as combating climate change and ensuring disaster preparedness. And we must not forget the empowerment of women. The resolutions on sustaining peace place great emphasis on conflict prevention. They also underline the importance of inclusion and the essential role that women play in the process. Inclusivity means staying true to the 2030 Agenda's pledge to leave no one behind. Inclusive and sustained peacebuilding means the full participation of women in society, without which neither peace nor prosperity can be assured over the long term.

Women's empowerment transforms our communities and makes peace more sustainable. Evidence shows that peacebuilding interventions are more effective if they are directly tied to promoting gender equality. What is more, women should be active agents in peace negotiations and peacebuilding, not merely the beneficiaries of services of protection. The inclusion of women and women's groups in conflict-resolution and peacebuilding processes measurably strengthens protection efforts, deepens the effectiveness of peacebuilding and helps to ensure the sustainability of peace accords.

UNDP, the United Nations agency I work most closely with, knows from experience that this is the most effective approach. Supporting the capacity of countries to prevent violent conflict, sustain peace and include women in the process is a major part of UNDP's work. For example, in Malawi, UNDP and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs supported the Government in establishing a national peace architecture that enables women and youth to act as national conflict mediators. Gender equality contributes to durable peace and sustainable development. Systematic disparities between women and men in the economic, social and political sectors stand in the way of the sustainable development and durable peace.

Women should be engaged in all spheres of social life, and their priorities must inform the agenda for sustainable development, conflict prevention, early recovery from crisis, lasting peace and resilience. To make that a reality, the necessary funds and resources must be allocated to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, especially in peacebuilding contexts. Promoting both the empowerment of women and the maintenance of peace and inclusive societies are key elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNDP and other United Nations agencies have made women's empowerment and sustainable development the centrepiece of their efforts to help support and promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies. United Nations agencies have been undertaking such prevention-focused initiatives in many parts of the world. For instance, thanks to its field presence in nearly 170 countries and the breadth of its technical expertise, UNDP is able to provide tailored and integrated support to nations and their leadership in many areas, including the rule of law, access to justice, human rights, elections, constitutional processes, local governance, sustainable livelihoods and climate adaptation.

The fundamental premise of the recently published United Nations and World Bank joint report, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, is that we simply cannot achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals without addressing and preventing conflict. In fact, the Sustainable Development Goals provide a blueprint to help eliminate the root causes of violence and unrest. Building and sustaining peace are at the very core of the United Nations. If we are to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, sustainable development will be imperative, but development is neither achievable nor sustainable in the absence of peace. It is critical that we work in concert towards attaining both sustainable peace and sustainable development.

As we know, the States Members of the United Nations carry the key responsibility for achieving and sustaining peace. Realizing lasting peace is a long-term endeavour that involves building resilient institutions, securing economic transformation and addressing inequalities and grievances that can lead to conflict. We must recognize that this process can take years, and even decades. We must therefore give the United Nations system the time, space and resources to pursue long-term strategies that yield lasting results. Let us focus this high-level meeting on how we can work together to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to deliver on its mandate to eradicate the root causes of conflict, prevent the escalation of violence, bring about lasting peace and leave no one behind.

The President: I thank Ms. Yeoh for her statement.

In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Mr. Ishmael Beah, United Nations International Children's Fund Advocate for Children Affected by War.

Mr. Beah (UNICEF Advocate for Children Affected by War): I thank you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General for convening this timely and much-needed gathering to evaluate the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I would also like to thank the rest of those present: Ambassadors and representatives of various nations, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, youth groups and civil society — all who do tne vital work of safeguarding and preserving humankind.

Perhaps one of the most important values and an essential trait of the United Nations is that it remains the only place in the world where we can all gather to discuss the importance of being of service to humankind and the world. The world needs the Organization and such gatherings more than ever, and our discussions must be in the spirit of safeguarding the very sacrosanct nature of human life everywhere.

My capacity as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for children affected by war and conflict tasks me with advocating on behalf of the world's most vulnerable members and its future — children. If we embark on peacebuilding without them — without serious, intelligent and honest thinking about them and without shaping a world that not only protects them but makes them active citizens of their nations, with the moral and ethical standards that enable them to be decent human beings — we have failed, and all our efforts here today will not yield a future to be proud of.

With that in mind, it is no surprise how worrying and disturbing it is to think about the current state of our world — a world in which children continue to live in myriad conflicts and are under attack on a shocking scale, with parties to conflicts blatantly disregarding international law, policies, resolutions and even national laws regarding the protection of the most vulnerable members of our society.

From Syria to South Sudan, Myanmar to Yemen, Nigeria and so on, children are being targeted and exposed to attacks and brutal violence in their homes, schools and playgrounds. As those attacks continue year after year, we cannot become numb. Those levels of brutality cannot become the new normal. Children have become front-line targets and are used as human shields, killed, maimed and recruited to fight. Rape, forced marriages, abductions and enslavement have become standard tactics in conflict. Millions more children are paying an indirect price for such conflict and are suffering from malnutrition, disease and trauma as basic services, including access to food, water, sanitation and health care, are denied, damaged or destroyed in the fighting. In a good number of cases, those basic necessities are never met or were not available to begin with.

Amid the horrors that children living in conflict are exposed to are moments of hope, such as the release last week of 200 children from armed groups in South Sudan. But much more needs to be done. UNICEF and other organizations are working to protect and provide for children living in war, and we call on all the parties to conflicts and all with influence over them to end violations against children. That call has been made time and time again since I was a child and living through war myself.

We have come a long way since the Graça Machel report (see A/51/306), which led to the creation of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the adoption of optional protocols, the Paris and Capetown Principles and many Security Council resolutions. There is no shortage of important and noble ideas and policies. However, there remains a lack of commitment on the part of nations to fully implementing those wonderful ideas on paper, most of which are not legally binding documents, but rather were created on the understanding that, as a world, we agree that we cannot sink below a certain threshold of human dignity. Nowadays, I am not certain whether that is true.

United Nations University recently issued a study, entitled *Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with Armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict*, commissioned by various United Nations agencies, with the participation of civil society in countries where the research was carried out on the ground. It focuses particularly on the concepts of radicalization and deradicalization in three ongoing conflicts in the world, with case studies on Syria, Iraq, Mali and Nigeria and research from other nations. It is a study that I recommend we all read to understand our purpose here today.

Its argument is that the terrorist and extremist groups that pose new security threats in the world, and particularly the children who find themselves in such groups during demobilization, are being perceived and treated differently by States. Some children face trial instead of rehabilitation. They face punitive measures that are very direct violations of the principles of international law and most of the resolutions that we adopt. The reality that I want to highlight is explained in the research.

> "Association with groups determined to be 'terrorist' or 'violent extremist' is increasingly criminalized, and children caught up in these determinations face detention, prosecution and, sometimes, abuse. Some States are prosecuting juveniles under adult terrorism legislation, and some are 'lowering the age of criminal responsibility, allowing courts to prosecute children as young as 15'. In Iraq, authorities are holding 'more than 1,400 foreign women and their children who surrendered with ISIS fighters in late August 2017' on questionable legal bases; in Kurdistan, boys are being detained and tortured on suspicion of having joined ISIS; and in Syria, boys leaving Raqqa are being arrested and 'detained, abused and stigmatized for perceived affiliations'. The Nigerian Government is currently thought to be detaining thousands of children (as well as adults) who it fears are associated with Boko Haram. Many of the detained have been encountered during military operations, but others — including large numbers of children — appear to have been arrested arbitrarily as they fled from Boko Haram. These detainees, without charges or access to family and lawyers, are kept in deplorable conditions and appear to be held in violation of Nigerian and international law. Outside conflict contexts, states are also amending criminal laws and administrative procedures to bolster existing counter-terrorism powers. In France, as part of an effort to strengthen the State's counter-terrorism posture, the maximum period of pretrial detention was increased to three years for children aged 16 and older. Terrorism offences have become so broad that loose affiliation, preparatory or ancillary acts and material support are increasingly covered, which makes children much more likely to be caught in the net, given that children do not generally play the roles of ordering, commanding or planning terrorist activities.
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> "Some States are using a child's (or adult's) suspected or demonstrated association with armed groups as grounds for barring their re-entry into the country and/or stripping their citizenship. Some states have implemented administrative measures to discourage people from returning from conflict zones, and have gone so far as to refuse to let children back in their countries after suspected involvement with an armed group. For example, the United Kingdom Home Secretary announced that the Government has the power to revoke British citizenship if doing so is in the public's interest."

There are already significant underlying problems in societies that are exacerbated by the presence of jihadists or radical groups. The way forward is to attend to those problems rather than holding children accountable for it all. There must be an exception when it comes to what we agree on to protect children, and that must always be in the best interests of the child.

If we leave here today — and we have to be honest with each other — to build peace in the world, we have to make sure that, in so doing, we do not violate the very principles or fundamental rights of human dignity as we move forward. We all understand that there is a need for security in the world and what must be done to attain that, but as we do so, let us not forget our humanity in that process.

The President: I thank Mr. Beah for his statement.

In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Joy Onyesoh, President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Nigeria.

Ms. Onyesoh (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the honour of addressing the General Assembly this morning.

In my capacity as the President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Nigeria, I have had the opportunity to work at multiple levels. In one of my visits to an internally displaced persons camp in a community in Borno state, in north-eastern Nigeria, I met a lady whom I will call Amina. Amina recounted her story of the conflict that pervades north-eastern Nigeria. As she fled her community, which had been attacked by Boko Haram, she had with her three children: a young child of seven months, a daughter of ten and a son of four. As they fled the attack, she strapped her baby daughter onto her back and asked her oldest daughter to take care of her younger son, and they ran. In the course of running, she did not know when the child she had strapped onto her back fell off. Her oldest daughter did not know when she lost hold of her younger brother. That is one of the realities of the human cost of conflict.

In talking about sustaining peace, we should be aware that we need a multi-pronged, integrated approach that involves putting local women's voices and rights at its centre and a shift from crisis response to more proactive conflict prevention. That requires reorienting work around amplifying local women's meaningful participation and analysing root causes in order to achieve peace. An effective, gendered conflict analysis involves a participatory approach that engages and utilizes the experience of diverse stakeholders. The process should aim to exchange structural power for gender equality and women's human rights.

Amina is just one of the thousands of women whom we see in various countries, from Nigeria to Cameroon, and from the Niger to Chad and Columbia. They are the faces and reality of armed conflict. If the United Nations and the international community are to effectively support the participation of and curb overt risk to marginalized communities, therefore, it is critical to ensure a holistic approach to prevention that strengthens women's human rights and reduces armed and violent conflict, including by addressing violent masculinity and disarmament.

A commitment to gendered conflict analysis must prioritize increased engagement with civil society as a key stakeholder, driving measures aimed at ensuring its substantive participation. That should go beyond the tokenism of numbers to concrete engagement and the development of targeted interventions that are contextually relevant and appropriate. It also requires creating an enabling environment for female civil society that ensures access to justice and increases core ongoing and sustained funding and political support for the work that women are doing on the ground.

I commend the increase in the number of civil-society speakers who addressed the Security Council last year. The Security Council mission to the Lake Chad basin, which prioritized early meetings with civil society and the increased engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict with civil society, was really very commendable.

On my flight to New York from Nigeria, I had the opportunity to watch an American-produced movie, *Hidden Figures*. The movie narrates and visualizes the different realities of three female United States National Air and Space Administration mathematicians, portrayed by Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe and Taraji Henson, who transcend gender and race lines to help launch an astronaut, portrayed by Glen Powell, into outer space. One thing that struck me about the movie is the extent to which women are hidden figures in conflict prevention, conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes. We keep talking about women being at the centre of sustainable peace, but how do we implement those strategies and words that we have repeated for so long on the ground?

We live and work within structures that persistently exclude, discriminate against and stereotype women. The talk we hear does not match the actions being taken on the ground. As female activists, we will keep pushing and advocating for an integrated approach that puts the rights and perspectives of women at the centre of sustaining peace. The women and peace and security agenda is one of the most recognized at the United Nations, and yet funding for gender equality and the building of women's movements remains inadequate.

Between 2012 and 2013, only 2 per cent of peace and security aid for fragile States targeted gender equality. Between 2010 and 2015, the financial support allocated by major donor countries to promoting gender equality dropped by more than 50 per cent. Of the approximately 74 existing national action plans on women and peace and security, only 23 per cent include an allocated budget for implementation. We continue to witness gender-blind national budgets that have resulted in cuts in public health and social service-related expenditure, contributing to the feminization of poverty and further deepening gender inequality.

As part of the more than 100 years of action by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for an integrated approach to peace and security, we call for action to put women's participation and rights at the centre of conflict prevention on sustaining peace. In particular, we call for a gendered conflict analysis across the United Nations system that is based on the perspectives of local women and on partnerships that prioritize women in civil society as key stakeholders, with financing that substantially scales up funding for gender equality, including core ongoing support for women in civil society. Finally, sustaining peace requires a consistent and committed political will to move out of our comfort zones and challenge the dominant narratives on gender, conflict analysis and power.

As we continue our dialogue as part of the high-level meeting, I will leave the following big question for us to reflect on. Beyond the rhetoric, are we committed to taking the bold steps that will ensure an inclusive, accountable and demilitarized approach to sustaining peace? That is a question that we need to ask ourselves as a collective. The United Nations system is a beacon of hope for men and women alike, and we should keep that hope and its flame burning.

The President: I thank Ms. Onyesoh for her statement.

In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Ms. Wickramanayake (Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth): What if I said that conflict was good? "Conflict is not bad; in fact, it is good", 25-year-old Mohammed told me as we sat inside a temporary shelter in a camp for internally displaced persons in Baghdad. The camp was overpopulated with displaced Iraqis who had come from Mosul last August, and all had lost their homes, property, education or loved ones during their dreadful journey escaping Da'esh.

"How can someone who lost everything to a conflict say that conflict is not bad?" I asked him in surprise. Mohammed went on.

> "Over time, the term 'conflict' has received a negative connotation. I beg to differ. The existence of conflict means that there is diversity, that there are differences of opinions and that the status quo is being challenged, all of which are important for the growth of human civilization. But what truly decides if a conflict is good or bad is the way that we choose to deal with it and resolve it. The decision to use non-violence over violence, dialogue over arrogance and compromise over intransigence will decide how conflicts are written in the history books. We have grown up in an age of unfathomable conflict, violence and unprecedented forced displacement. If any generation knows the value of peace, it is ours. It is therefore our responsibility, as a generation, not to repeat the mistakes of past generations. There will always be conflicts, but our generation will choose to resolve them in peace."

I could not agree with Mohammed more. The complex nature of sustaining peace requires us to tap into the potential and creativity of young people, the largest generation in the history of the world. An estimated 408 million young people live in settings affected by armed conflict and violence. Yesterday I had the privilege to brief the Security Council on youth, peace and security (see S/PV.8241). At the heart of the debate were discussions on the contributions of young women and men to conflict prevention, humanitarian relief, peace negotiations and durable peace. There was a resounding call to support young people who work on peace and stability in their communities, often with very little support, funding or visibility and sometimes under direct threat.

I encourage everyone to read the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see A/72/761), which contains the unfiltered views and aspirations of more than 4,000 young people from across the world. It gives us unique insights into how young people see and experience the world we live in, their hopes for peace and security, and their demands towards Governments and the multilateral system.

According to the progress study on youth, peace and security, and illustrated over and over in my interactions with young people on the ground, there are two key issues that we need to address immediately. The first is the growing mistrust of young generations for formal political institutions, and the second is the exclusion of young people from meaningful participation in civic, political and economic life.

Supporting youth participation mechanisms, such as youth councils, youth-led organizations and networks, and including young people in electoral processes, political party structures, formal peace processes and decision-making bodies at the local, national and international levels, is key to durable peace. As I always like to say, meaningful youth participation is prevention. I am confident that this high-level meeting will emphasize concrete actions that can address the mistrust that young people have so vehemently expressed and the structural injustices that they face, which prevent them from realizing their true potential.

For too long, young people have been calling on the United Nations to go beyond addressing the immediate needs of war-torn countries to focusing on sustaining peace. We need the United Nations to be proactive, not reactive. That is why we need to build on the youth, peace and security agenda mandated by Security Council resolution 2250 (2015). It lies at the intersection of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the women and peace and security agenda and the human rights framework, and is a core contribution to the prevention of conflict and violence. The agenda was born to ensure that young people are called on not only when it is time to wave flags, when their votes are needed, or to go to war, but that they are also listened to and taken seriously when they want to shape their present and future.

Yesterday, on behalf of young people, I asked the Security Council to further strengthen the youth, peace and security agenda and open up regular discussions on the role of youth in sustaining peace. Today, I issue the same call to members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is composed of representatives of every Member State; with its enormous reach it can make a huge difference to the current generation of young people. In doing so, those young people will open doors for future generations to come. Youth-led peacebuilding can benefit from members' political, institutional and, most importantly, financial support. That is why I call on them now to ensure that youth rights are central to sustaining peace.

I have two brief recommendations for consideration at the interactive dialogues today and tomorrow.

First, sustainable financing for peace should entail a significant funding increase for the peacebuilding work that is led by young people. Earlier this morning, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General called for an increase in the Peacebuilding Fund's resources. Allow me to take that call a step further and invite members of the General Assembly to consider adequately financing the youth instrument of the Peacebuilding Fund in order to offer tangible support to young peacebuilders on the ground. Those young people have a unique ability to access remote communities and marginalized stakeholders. They need accessible funding streams and support to strengthen their organizations.

Secondly, Member States must see young people as their partners in the sustaining peace agenda and not as a footnote to be dealt with in their policies or problems. Transforming the United Nations work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, especially in the field, requires making sure that Governments and United Nations country teams are equipped with the know-how and structures to engage young people as the productive and positive actors they are. Our new approach to peace must ensure that young people are integrated into all sequence stages of the sustaining peace agenda, from planning to implementation, from its review to ensuring durability.

Uninformed discussions and mainstream media highlight young people as a threat to peace and security, but I have had the unique privilege of meeting young peacebuilders on the ground. I met with a youth group in Iraq that is working with young people from diverse backgrounds, religions and ethnicities to train one another to resolve conflicts through dialogue and negotiation. In Somalia, I met young people who formed an emergency response group to the Mogadishu terror attacks last year. In Colombia, I met with young people who organized a peace camp and who, through silent protest, applied pressure on their Government until a new peace deal was reached. Here in the United States, I watched young people march for their lives.

That is the potential and commitment that young people offer to Member States as policymakers. We can choose to ignore that call and we can choose to exclude that potential. However, that would mean that 20 years from now, I would sit in this Hall and would have to listen to another young person calling for youth empowerment and demanding her rights, and we would still be at the same point in history, without having moved an inch forward. I ask members of the General Assembly to please remember that a generation is counting on them to make the right decisions.

The President: I thank Ms. Wickramanayake for her statement.

We have heard the last speaker for the opening segment of the high-level meeting.

We shall now begin the high-level segment, to be followed by the plenary debate.

I would like to remind members that action on draft resolution A/72/L.49 will be taken after we exhaust the list of speakers for the plenary debate.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Philippe, King of the Belgians.

King Philippe (*spoke in French*): Achieving sustainable peace in the world — is that not our shared ambition? Peace is more necessary than ever, but also more than ever within reach. It is not a utopia. We have to believe in it and act accordingly. The fact that the number of major violent conflicts has tripled since 2010 compels us to react. Hundreds of thousands of women, men and children are dying, being forcibly displaced or going into exile to survive. Economies are being destroyed. Countries are struggling to rebuild. Realizing that compels us to react with even more determination, given that the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted only two years ago, is at risk in many countries because of internal conflicts.

In the course of its history at the heart of Europe, Belgium has lived through major armed conflicts. My country committed fully to the United Nations and to European construction, because both projects support lasting peace and are based on dialogue, solidarity and respect for others. Europe was built on extensive reconciliation and gradual rapprochement. For a country like mine, which has for centuries been a land of battlefields, being home to the capital of a peaceful Europe is not just a historical victory; above all, it is the result of sustained effort. Europe is an exciting project, which we must continue building and improving. It requires constant vigilance and a real force of conviction. The lasting peace we aspire to is more than the absence of war, and even more than the creation of institutions. It is the implementation of a framework that upholds human dignity.

This lasting peace is also what the Charter of the United Nations advocates when it invites us "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace". As its Preamble states, the Charter is based on "the dignity and worth of the human person". Our shared ambition is to create a society where nobody is humiliated and nobody is left behind — a society that enables all of us to have confidence in ourselves and express our talents. The dignity of a society is measured by its ability to take care of the weakest and the most fragile within it.

That is why Belgium firmly supports the guidance of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to make prevention of violence central to our Organization. The 2030 Agenda is an instrument of prevention, and therefore of development. Reducing poverty, inequality and discrimination, ensuring the protection of and respect for human rights, recognizing the equality of women in society, combating environmental degradation and establishing resilient institutions that are able to detect and manage tension are all actions that will enable us to tackle the root causes of conflicts. In our societies, stimulated, but also made more vulnerable by new technologies, increased vigilance is needed. And in a world with more fuzzy borders, that vigilance must be assumed by every one of us. Over the years, our Organization has developed effective instruments for risk detection and mediation. Let us use them fully, together with regional partners. Joining forces in order to better achieve our goals, does not imply giving up sovereignty, but rather fully exercising it.

Our Organization has also gained a great deal of experience in peacebuilding. We understand the importance of determined national leaders and of restoring inclusive and representative institutions that serve their people in preventing States emerging from conflict from plunging back into violence. The people must recognize themselves in these institutions and trust them. Lasting peace can only take root if it involves the whole society, including women and young people, who in many countries represent a growing share of the population. The common work of all these partners and the adoption of the process lays a solid basis for lasting peace.

While peace is forged through action, it takes hold through time. Human relationships are not decreed, they are patiently built or rebuilt based on trust. Conflicts and wars cause wounds so deep that the end of hostilities is only the beginning of a long journey. When addressing the Israeli Knesset in 1977, the late Egyptian President Anwar El-Sadat perfectly highlighted the importance of reconfiguring the relationships between parties. He said,

> "[T]here remained another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us, a barrier of suspicion, of rejection, of fear of deception ... a barrier of cautious and erroneous interpretations of every event and statement.... Today ... I ask you — why do we not stretch out our

hands with faith and sincerity so that together we might destroy this barrier?"

Time is needed to heal the wounds caused by humiliation and violence. Time is needed to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate. Time is needed to judge and punish. Time is needed to remember and for victims of humiliations to find in themselves the strength to stretch out their hand anew. Aware of the time necessary to achieve this work, our common duty, in every crisis, is to build the framework which makes lasting peace possible, without delay.

The failure of our Organization in recent years to prevent wars or bring them to a rapid conclusion should not overshadow the success that has been achieved, thanks not only to the determination of the international community when it has proved itself capable of acting for the common good, but also to the resolve of the parties involved and the leaders concerned.

Nevertheless, the scale, complexity and duration of many ongoing conflicts must encourage us to find other means that will ultimately bring us closer to the sustainable peace that is the subject of our discussion today. This is not an easy task, but it depends first and foremost on our faith in humankind and our loyalty to the Charter of the United Nations, to which we remain committed. Belgium intends to wholeheartedly honour that commitment and to pursue this ambition with determination.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Santos Calderón (*spoke in Spanish*): Achieving sustainable and lasting peace and closing the door permanently on a conflict that has been embedded in our society for more than five decades is the greatest challenge a nation can face. Just as it is more difficult to make peace than to wage war, it is more difficult to build peace than to silence the guns. That is the most sublime and significant challenge that any single nation must overcome and the only way in which we will be able to enjoy development, prosperity and understanding. In order to attain it, we had to lay the right foundations from the beginning. It was not enough to simply put an end to the conflict; we had to turn peace into a historic opportunity to overcome the major problems left unresolved by the war.

The first and undoubtedly most complex throughout all the negotiations was the tension between peace and justice. In order to find the right balance, our compass and our course placed the victims and their rights at the centre of our discussion and conflict resolution. We turned to the concept of transitional justice. We established more than a tribunal; it is a true system of truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence. It was the first time in history where both parties agreed on a justice system before adhering to it, in line with the Rome Statute. This special justice is responsible for prosecuting and punishing those who are ultimately responsible for the most serious crimes. It demands the whole truth, reparations for the victims and a commitment to non-recurrence. It also imposes sanctions within the concept of restorative justice.

The chief desire of many victims, even more than punishing those responsible, is to know the truth about what happened to their loved ones. To respond to that, we established the Commission on Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition, which is specifically tasked with establishing the truth of what happened in the conflict. There is no more pressing need than the search for the truth and knowing what happened. What happened to the people who disappeared during the conflict? It is for them that, as part of the transitional justice system, we created a special unit for searching for persons deemed missing. We managed to ensure that these three elements were up and running in less than a year and a half.

The success of such efforts is essential to achieving a stable and lasting peace, but we did not wait for the peace accord to honour the victims and their rights. Seven years ago, even before beginning peace negotiations, we enacted a historic law on victims and land restitution to begin repairing their damages and guaranteeing their rights. Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was present at its proclamation.

Today, Colombia has a national system for treating and making reparations to victims that is unparalleled in the world. We have already provided reparations to 800,000 victims, an unprecedented number, but we still have a long way to go. We are returning land to those who lost it as a result of the violence. Some 300,000 hectares of land have already been returned to their legitimate owners, and another 500,000 are awaiting a judicial ruling. Just as recognizing and defending the rights of victims is key to building peace, it is equally important to preventing more people from falling victim to such violations.

In that respect, once the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace was signed, the priority was to achieve the effective and rapid disarmament and demobilization of combatants. In Colombia, we achieved this with the invaluable support of the Security Council. It has been a process in which the greatest possible number of weapons per combatant have been surrendered in the shortest time. Just eight months after the signing of the Agreement, former combatants are beginning their reintegration process.

Colombia has vast experience in this area, and we have learned from it. We have learned to formulate productive endeavours and real-life projects. It is not easy, and simply having economic resources is not enough. It is necessary to educate and train people and have sustainable projects, or reintegration is doomed to failure and fuels further risks of violence, which we will not allow to happen.

A crucial component of the solution to an internal armed conflict was opening the doors of democracy to former combatants. The guerrilla faction that devastated our country for decades is now a legal political party that participates in elections and seeks to win the favour of citizens with words, not arms.

We are also clearing the Colombian countryside of the hidden and inhumane weapons that are anti-personnel mines. Of more than 670 contaminated municipalities, 225 are now free of suspected landmines, and we are currently taking action in another 230. Farmers, soldiers, ex-combatants and the international community are working together to completely rid our country of that covert enemy by 2022.

In Colombia, the scourge of drug trafficking has fuelled conflict, and conflict has made it difficult to effectively combat drug trafficking. That is why we have included the issue of drugs on the agenda for negotiation. Without the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejercito del Pueblo, we now have the opportunity to resolve the problem of coca production in a structural way for the first time. This has already begun in the form of voluntary substitution and forced eradication programmes. At the same time, our teams are continuing to fight on the front line against the other links in the chain, with unprecedented results in the volume of drugs seized, for example.

However, as I said two years ago at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (see A/S-30/PV.5), the war that the world declared on drugs here at the United Nations more than 40 years ago has not been won. The strategies based exclusively on their prohibition and repression have generated only more deaths, more prisoners and more dangerous criminal organizations.

Today, drug trafficking remains our main threat to peace. Transnational cartels kill social leaders in my country who are committed to crop substitution. The struggle to gain control of the business — which will continue to be a business as long as demand exists — has caused deaths and more violence in Colombia and in the region, as we saw in Ecuador just a week ago. If we want to end the litany of deaths and social destruction left behind by drug trafficking and protect peace in Colombia, the entire region and around the world, we must change our global strategy for overcoming the drug problem.

I would once again like to reiterate my urgent appeal to the world to open its eyes. We must recognize that, if we continue doing the same thing, we will continue to have the same results: more prisoners, more deaths and more mafias with more power. Jailing consumers and farmers does not work. Let us change our approach under the principle of shared responsibility. Let us work together to reduce demand and punish the transnational criminal organizations that profit from this business and sow trails of pain and death in their wake.

Building peace is like building a cathedral — it is a lengthy and complex process that takes time, brick by brick. We are only just beginning, but we can already see results. Last year was the most peaceful in Colombia's recent history, and we saw our lowest homicide rate of the past 42 years. We have encountered difficulties, of course, but we are moving forward. The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, chosen by both parties to oversee the process, has highlighted the Colombian peace accord as one of the best and most comprehensive in the world. According to the Institute's consideration of the 558 points of the agreement, the implementation of 238 of them has begun, which corresponds to 43 per cent of the total.

Immense challenges lie ahead, the most complex of which involves entrenching the State in every corner of the country and generating opportunities for long-term economic and social development, in which sustainable peace also has a part to play. On this front, we did not wait to sign the peace accord to start changing the fundamental conditions necessary to make it sustainable. In the past almost eight years, we have reduced poverty, made education the main priority of our budget, and established health care as a fundamental right for all Colombians. Having signed the Peace Agreement, we set up an implementation framework plan with a 15-year horizon that serves as our road map.

We have identified 500 indicators for the next 15 years. By the end of this year, we will have achieved 80 of them. We have so far met 61 per cent of these goals and we intend to accelerate our pace to reach 100 per cent. In the next 15 years, we have planned more than 129 billion pesos' worth of investments, or approximately $40 billion, to bring health care, education, housing, infrastructure and opportunities to the regions that suffered most as a result of the conflict. The actions and support of the international community will be just as crucial in the future as they have been until now, and for which we are truly grateful.

We had the honour of hosting Secretary-General Guterres in our country in January and the President of the General Assembly in March. They were able to witness first-hand the advances we have made and the challenges we face. We thank them wholeheartedly for their support and their presence.

This is the very essence of the concept of sustainable peace that brings us together today — an approach that includes an end to violence, reconciliation among people and with the environment, and a firm commitment to sustainable development. It is a peace that, as in the case of Colombia, empowers communities, especially women and the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities that suffered most from the hardships of the conflict. In Colombia, we have shown that putting an end to the highly complex conflicts and finding paths to understanding is possible. It is possible to heal wounds that are the result of decades of confrontation.

We are sharing our story with pride and hope for a better future, not only for ourselves but for all of humankind. We are sharing our story in the hope that it may prove useful in many other areas of our planet that still suffer the hardships of war, and we remain convinced that putting an end to armed conflicts, even the most complex and protracted, is possible. These are not just words or good intentions; the facts are there for all to see. In Colombia, with the support of the international community, we made the impossible possible.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Michael Higgins, President of Ireland.

President Higgins: On behalf of the people of Ireland, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, for convening this meeting, provoking as it does some fundamental questions about our very existence as the United Nations.

Is it not a profound condemnation of what we have made of the legacies of our cultures, reason, ethics and belief systems that we, in these first decades of the twenty-first century, live in a world that is home to so much war — wars for which the preparation absorbs the finest minds in science and technology, and in which civilians are more at risk than ever before, subject to atrocities, famine and starvation and, to an unprecedented degree, displacement?

Surely it is an affront to humankind that, in these first decades of the twenty-first century, with all its promise, at a time when we have the capacity to abolish all forms of human poverty, we share a planet with hundreds of millions who are deprived of their most fundamental rights and of a dignified existence even as we speak here today? Why have we resorted, I ask, to the politics of fear, rather than to the promise of the politics of possibility? Is it not nothing less than a moral outrage, too, that our boundless capacity for creativity and innovation and the fruits of new science and technology are turned not to the promotion and preservation of peace but to the pursuit and prosecution of war?

The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have invited all of us to gather here over these two days to reflect on the achievement of five specific objectives, each of which has been the subject of many debates, not only within the Assembly and the Security Council but in civic forums throughout the world. These objectives, in their scale and their ambition, are a confirmation that while building and sustaining peace is an enormous task, it is one that we must achieve together as a community of nations if we are to live up to the basic ideals of the United Nations and give the ring of authenticity to our words as public figures once again.

Ireland, the country I represent, knows from its own peace process, which continues to this day, that peace does not come without engaging with the experience of the other and that it remains a process to be nurtured. The Belfast Agreement, signed on Good Friday 20 years ago, demonstrates some of those conditions that you, Mr. President, have identified as essential to successful peacebuilding — direct engagement by the Governments involved in the negotiations; sustained financing for peacebuilding activities; strong support from the European Union and generous and patient backing from other Members of the United Nations, particularly those with a connection to Ireland, such as the United States. Nor could our peace have been achieved without the steady and courageous activism of those civic organizations campaigning for a more just and peaceful society, many of which were led by the women of Ireland, north and south.

Yet while we celebrate the end of violence in Ireland, as well as the lives saved and the futures transformed, we are reminded daily of the challenges of sustaining peace. I therefore did not look in the abstract at any of the objectives you have set for our meeting for these two days, Mr. President. The Secretary-General's report (A/72/707) outlines an ambitious plan of action and inclusion, particularly of gender and youth, for the agencies of the United Nations. But let us make no mistake — the Secretary-General is very clear that sustaining peace is the responsibility of all of us as Member States. Let us again recall the words of the founding Charter of the Organization:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Through these words, as Members we all assumed a most profound political and moral responsibility not only to the citizens of our own nations, but to the peoples of other nations. We must have the courage now to ask how we have come to lose this discourse of peace. What are the inevitabilities of the connection between economy, ecology and society that serve as obstacles to bringing a new paradigm of sustained peace and development into being?

The Secretary-General and the agencies of the United Nations will be successful in pursuing our common objective of sustaining peace only if we, the Member States, recommit to those founding principles to which we dedicated ourselves so many years ago. We must allow the new thinking and the new paradigms of critical thought to emerge.

As the Assembly recognized two years ago, the outbreak and recurrence of conflict can be prevented only by addressing its root causes. This demands political imagination and financial commitment, which must be met with answerable determination on the part of Member States. Investing in conflict prevention is, of course, a matter not only of moral duty, but also of financial prudence. I am aware that many Member States have been hesitant to commit resources to conflict prevention.

Yet as the Secretary-General has so often reminded us since he assumed office, sufficient and effective investment in building peace will not only save lives but will open all the possibilities and opportunities for development and human flourishing that peace brings. These are indeed necessary if we are to accomplish the goals of that most remarkable recognition of our shared global responsibility, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ireland is pleased that the Secretary-General has laid down this challenge. We know that when the United Nations and its Member States work coherently across the pillars of peace and security, human rights and development, real sustained and measurable progress is possible.

Humanitarian actions must no longer be allowed to serve as sufficient responses to crises that are political in their origins. Humanitarian action is not a substitute for political dialogue and mediation, nor is the remarkable work of United Nations peacekeepers, whose service, including that of many Irish men and women over the past 60 years, I salute here today. United Nations peace support operations save countless lives, but they can only ever be a single element in a comprehensive response.

If we are to truly commit ourselves to the objective of sustaining peace, we must discard any easy route, laziness or media cynicism. For example, the young people of the world are appalled by the suggestion that what is normative here in the General Assembly does not reflect the structure of the powerful in the Security Council, where the wielders of power can prevail. That is why we are losing them.

Let us instead heed these lost hopes of all our collective past, those pleas for wisdom that were the whispers from the gallery when so many of the newly freed States brought the hopes of their peoples and the wisdom of their struggles to the United Nations. Let us once again, in this Hall, recall the energy of that moral moment — the bravery, the critical scholarship and the hope that animated our forebears in their better moments. Let us devote ourselves to the cause of a universal peace that encompasses all the people of our shared and vulnerable planet.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic.

President Touadéra (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Central African Republic, I would like to greet the world leaders united here, and to particularly thank the Secretary-General for organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Since 1945, the issue of peace has been central to the Charter of the United Nations and has called out to all humankind. That is why I express my support for the new shared vision that the Secretary-General intends to forge to bolster the actions undertaken by Member States to build peace and construct resilient, prosperous nations, in accordance with the commitment to leaving no one behind.

The Central African Republic wholeheartedly supports this vision. Indeed, since I took office on 30 March 2016, I have firmly enshrined peace within our constitutional legality and the shared responsibility of the Government and all national stakeholders. The necessary institutions called for in the Constitution, with the exception of the Senate, were therefore established within 12 months. The representation of women at all levels as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacebuilding, is also a part of this vision. On 24 November 2016, our National Assembly enacted law No. 16004, establishing gender parity in the Central African Republic, with the aim of achieving total parity by 2030.

At the political level, through a series of meetings, I have established a frank and sincere dialogue with the armed groups in order to bring them into the Republic, and, under my authority, we set up a programme for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, security sector reform and national reconstruction. Of 14 identified groups, 12 joined the programme and their participation in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component has been a great success, with young people making a significant contribution.

Furthermore, the United Nations peacebuilding and development assistance framework for the Central African Republic, which assists the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for 2017-2021, supports national priorities, including preventive diplomacy, thanks to the pivotal role played by regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of the Libreville road map and through the Panel of Facilitators of the African Initiative, which is currently analysing the demands of armed groups. I also believe that the efforts made by the Peacebuilding Commission on cross-border and regional issues should be supported and coordinated in order to facilitate close collaboration with our partners, including the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the World Bank.

At this pivotal moment in its history, the Central African Republic is making progress in the restoration of State authority and security, thanks to the installation of prefects and sub-prefects and the initial deployment of the Central African Armed Forces and internal security forces upon the gradual return of the territorial administration. We are seeing encouraging progress in the restoration of the rule of law in the fight against impunity, as exemplified in the recent trial of members of armed groups of all stripes before the Bangui Criminal Court. The full operationalization of the Special Criminal Court and the establishment of a truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission are expected shortly.

However, many challenges remain, including in the security situation. To that end, we reiterate our thanks and gratitude to the United Nations and to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its essential role in securing and protecting civilian populations. We reiterate our call for reinforcing MINUSCA with operational and professional troops and through the transition from peacekeeping to peace enforcement, in order to avoid undermining peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, which is often the result of the diffuse, illogical and sometimes contradictory nature of international action.

The Central African Republic would like to be able to serve as a model of success for the efforts made by the international community.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of the Gambia.

President Barrow: With warm greetings from the Gambia, I thank the President of the General Assembly for my invitation to participate in this high-level meeting on the pertinent topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The United Nations was founded for the purpose of ending the scourge of war and building peace in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the light of our current geopolitical realities, the fulfilment of this mission has become even more relevant today. We have come very far, but we are still witnessing too many conflicts in too many parts of the world. In Africa, we are committed to silencing the guns on the continent by 2020. With the support of the United Nations and the international community, we can achieve this challenging objective.

As we chart a way forward in our deliberations in the next two days on how to better equip the Organization for building and sustaining peace, I call on the Assembly to take a moment to reflect on the dividends of sustained peace for our countries and the world at large. For us in the Gambia, the recognition of the urgent need for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in our restored democracy has compelled my Government, from its inception, to embark on a number of initiatives with a view to consolidating our democratic gains and achieving good governance.

Following the adoption of our new national development plan for 2018 to 2021, my Government's priorities have been geared towards economic growth, transformation and development, with an emphasis on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In this regard, I would like to highlight some of the achievements we have attained with the assistance of our partners, whose continued support and cooperation remain unwavering.

Following our successful transition, I am happy to say that we have carried out the first phase of our security sector reform programme. The security situation in the Gambia has improved steadily, and the Government is fully committed to scaling up the programme during the next phase.

To promote economic growth, we have reduced our domestic borrowing and addressed our unsustainable debt burden. We have adopted efficient fiscal and macroeconomic policies and strategies to those ends. Since December 2016, interest rates have been steadily declining, which is encouraging local businesses to borrow and invest without fear of high interest rates.

A critical review of the 2017 budget has led to a reduction of Government expenditures by approximately 1 per cent of our gross domestic product. My office was the first entity to receive a budget cut, of 75 per cent. The budget support agreements concluded with our development partners, such as the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the African Development Bank and many others, have given my Government renewed optimism with respect to development and ultimately economic growth.

The growing youth population has become an added priority that cannot be ignored. Youth unemployment must be addressed in ways that give young people the opportunity to realize their full potential. For that reason, my Government has launched a joint youth empowerment project with the EU, focusing on the development of skills and job creation for young people and providing opportunities for business start-ups. In an effort to administer justice and address human rights violations committed against innocent victims by the former regime, in 2017 my Government successfully concluded a nationwide consultation on establishing a truth, reconciliation and reparation commission. Truth and reconciliation should help us to heal as a nation. The commission will therefore soon commence its work.

Consolidation of the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and the pursuit of economic growth are major priorities of my Government. In that connection, I am happy to report that, with our dedication and commitment to good governance, my Government has successfully assured the citizenry of a Government rooted in democracy and the rule of law. The suppression of freedom of expression and undermining judicial processes and independence have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

Last, but by no means least, our laws, including the national Constitution, are being reviewed as part of the process of strengthening democracy.

With the measures that I have outlined, our overarching goal is to build and sustain the peace that we have achieved. Today, I am hopeful as I stand before the General Assembly with renewed optimism for the future of our country. We thank our neighbours and partners in the Economic Community of West African

States, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which we continue to count on for their relentless support. With zeal, confidence and optimism, we are now on a solid path to durable peace. Our experience underscores the importance of regional and international solidarity and cooperation, together with sustained preventive diplomacy, as important elements of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In drawing up our recently adopted national development plan, my Government took into account the importance of democracy, transparency, the rule of law and economic growth and highlighted those elements as key priorities for sustainable peace and development. In our quest to advance sustainable peace, we firmly believe that those key areas of concern must be mainstreamed in our national efforts.

Institutional reforms and people-centred approaches will continue to inform our peacebuilding efforts. My Government will remain committed to creating an enabling environment that encourages constructive criticism, including a new and vigorous role for civil society. As a partner, civil society plays a crucial role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We strongly believe that it is the duty of every Government to provide its citizens with an atmosphere that will enable them to develop their full potential if they are to grow as a people in a sustained peaceful environment. By extension, it is urgent that we have support for both our national and regional strategies to eradicate organized crime, trafficking in persons, terrorism and violent extremism.

We recognize that we have huge challenges to overcome, as is to be expected in any restored democracy. They include reviving our economy and undertaking comprehensive reform of our laws and various administrative institutions. Amid all those challenges, peacebuilding and sustaining peace will receive their due attention in the new Gambia.

In view of our circumstances, while reiterating my appreciation to our partners, I urge them to be steadfast in their continued material and financial support, capacity-building initiatives, technical cooperation and exchange of ideas. I also reaffirm my confidence in our ability to achieve our collective goal of peacebuilding and sustaining global peace. However, our efforts must be effectively coordinated. The United Nations, regional organizations and the international community will continue to learn from each other's best practices by forging or consolidating partnerships for peace. In the same vein, national efforts or programmes need to be supported through the provision of material and technical assistance geared towards peacebuilding. I urge that the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund be provided with generous financial resources so that timely and critical interventions may be launched to support Governments. In short, we must embark on a renewed push for partnerships at the national, regional and global levels.

In conclusion, I would like to leave Member States with an old African proverb: If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jüri Ratas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Ratas (Estonia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this timely meeting on how to build sustainable peace for all.

The conflicts and crises in today's world have grown in intensity and scale, becoming increasingly troubling to resolve. Focusing on conflict prevention helps us to spare resources in responding to crises and, most important, to save lives.

The United Nations is an important pillar in today's multilateral architecture. Estonia is an advocate of maintaining a strong multilateral system. We must continue to strengthen it. Considering the number of crises and the tragic consequences that they have on the civilian population, we have to admit that the United Nations has not always lived up to its full potential and tasks.

The United Nations system therefore needs to work in a more integrated, flexible and coordinated manner. Estonia supports the Secretary-General's reform agenda and the sustaining-peace concept. I am convinced that prevention should be at the core of the work of the United Nations. Peace will be sustainable only if we make progress with regard to development and address the root causes of conflict. The United Nations reform agendas on peace and security, management and development should reinforce coherence and the One United Nations and fit-for-purpose visions. I am glad that support for the reform of the United Nations system by all stakeholders is greater than ever today.

In fostering the sustaining peace agenda, we cannot rely on the United Nations system alone, since sustaining peace is primarily the responsibility of Member States. We must have the will to put into practice policies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. I am proud to say that two years ago, Estonia was among the first countries to present a voluntary review on achieving them.

The role of Member States in investing more in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping is also critical. Estonia had the privilege of being a member of the Peacebuilding Commission last year. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission is a central actor in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the United Nations system, and we support its broader focus.

Inequality and political, social or economic exclusion are among the most common reasons that lead to internal violent conflict. The World Bank and the United Nations drew that conclusion in their joint study, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. Democratic governance, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and transparent, accountable State institutions are therefore essential to achieving stability and peace. It is also crucial that we fully recognize and support the role of women and young people in sustaining peace.

Over the years, Estonia has participated in several United Nations peacekeeping missions and has given humanitarian and development aid all over the world. We have been contributing to the Peacebuilding Fund for five years, and we believe that it is an effective instrument for providing fast and flexible assistance. Estonia currently contributes to missions in Lebanon and Mali and to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

I can assure members of the General Assembly that Estonia is fully committed to implementing the sustaining peace agenda and will work to maintain peace. We are also promoting those ideas in our first-ever bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period from 2020 to 2021.

I hope that today's discussions will lead to concrete actions towards building more peaceful societies together.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mikheil Janelidze, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mr. Janelidze (Georgia): I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General, for putting the issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the top of the United Nations agenda and convening this high-level meeting.

In a world fraught with conflict, our collective resolve to advance the cause of sustaining peace is more timely than ever. By adopting twin resolutions in 2016 — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, we took a step towards a common vision of peace. With due attention given to all thephases of conflict, we put prevention at the core of United Nations efforts and committed to the fact that sustaining peace is a nation-driven and joint responsibility that flows through all three pillars of the United Nations. To that end, let me share some observations from my national perspective as a representative of a country that has now been struggling with foreign occupation, conflict-driven violence and forced displacement for more than 25 years.

Since the early 1990s, Georgia has needed international engagement in assisting it in addressing the consequences of ethnic cleansing, violations of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, mass expulsions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, and grave violations of human rights in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. While Georgia has never hosted a United Nations peacekeeping mission with a full-fledged mandate, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) played an important role in helping to achieve security after 1993. The termination of the UNOMIG mandate through the use of a veto in the Security Council, and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission after the 2008 military aggression of the Russian Federation, created a vacuum in the international presence in the occupied regions, where arbitrary detentions, abductions and killings are the norm.

Despite the growing awareness and calls on the part of the international community, as well as the resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the existing international security and peacebuilding architecture cannot effectively address that loophole to ensure international peacekeeping, human rights monitoring or any other type of presence on the ground. Despite the clear provision of the ceasefire agreement of August 2008 mediated by the European Union (EU) on the creation of international security arrangements, no progress has been achieved to that end. Even the EU Monitoring Mission, which is an unarmed civilian mission that works effectively in the Government-controlled territory of Georgia, is not allowed to enter the regions illegally occupied by Russia.

One month ago, a Georgian IDP, Archil Tatunashvili, who crossed the occupation line was detained and killed by the occupying Power in the Tskhinvali region, and the perpetrator is at large. Before that, another IDP, Giga Otkhozoria, was murdered on the occupation line of the Abkhazia region. Again, the perpetrator is at large. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons are not allowed to go back to their homes, and those who live there are completely discriminated against and have no basic rights.

That leads me to emphasize the important link between justice and sustaining peace. Justice and peace are intrinsically linked. The chances of achieving lasting and sustainable peace without addressing the fundamental issue of justice are practically impossible. I would therefore like to voice Georgia's strong, continuing commitment to international norms and principles in resolving the conflict.

We are grateful for the strong and unwavering support of almost all the members of the United Nations with regard to a peaceful settlement of the Russia-Georgia conflict, based on international law and respect for Georgia's territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. We hope that members of the General Assembly will continue to call on Russia to abide by its international obligations and create an environment that is conducive to conflict resolution, based on international norms.

Despite this deadlock, we should not abandon the cause but should rather make every effort to find solutions to address the needs of people living in those territories in order to shoulder our common responsibility to leave no one behind. Despite all the provocations and barriers on the road, therefore, the Government of Georgia continues to take bold action under its reconciliation and engagement policy to build confidence, improve economic ties and foster people-to-people contacts across the dividing lines. This month, we announced a major peace initiative, "Step towards a better future", to bridge and bring closer together the communities living in and outside the regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. The comprehensive legislative package incorporates three key directions.

First, we want to enhance and facilitate trade along the dividing line through the support of individual and joint business projects. Secondly, we want to create opportunities for access to quality education and facilitate access to education at all levels. Youth is at the centre of our engagement policy, since it is the young people on both sides of the dividing line who will live together in a unified Georgia and participate in the rebuilding of the country. Thirdly, we wish to facilitate access for the people living in the two regions to the benefits that are available to Georgian citizens through our development, including European integration, visa liberalization and free trade, among others.

That is an ambitious initiative that the Government of Georgia is pursuing without any politicization. We appreciate the support that the international community has expressed for that endeavour, and we hope to see the active engagement of members of the General Assembly in the process.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all the peacekeepers who risk their lives all over the world. Georgia is a contributor to global peacekeeping efforts, being one of the largest contributors to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, as well as a supporter of the EU missions in the Central African Republic and Mali. We join others in calling for the enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping, since it is the United Nations instrument most vital to achieving peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Marija Pejčinović Burić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

Mrs. Burić (Croatia): Allow me to express my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this important and timely high-level meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. In addition, I would like to add several remarks concerning our national point of view.

Peacebuilding is one of the most important and complex challenges in contemporary international relations, which are plagued by increasing instability, regional conflicts, civil wars and the suffering of millions of civilians. To address those issues properly, a parallel focus on the political, security, development, environmental and human rights aspects is required. No country or international organization can meet those challenges alone; they can be addressed only through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

In that context, wegreatly appreciate and welcome the Secretary-General's reform proposals in the field of peace and security, with the aim of achieving greater efficiency on the ground and a higher synergy among the three United Nations pillars. With that in mind, the review of the peacebuilding architecture on a regular basis serves as a very useful platform. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue his work regarding the United Nations reform processes. It is our task to enable and empower his efforts with concrete support, as well as to keep this subject high on our collective agenda in the future.

As a victim of aggression in the last decade of the twentieth century, Croatia gained an in-depth understanding and first-hand knowledge of peacebuilding and post-war recovery, and we stand ready to share that valuable experience. Within the United Nations agenda, today's topic remains a central tenet for Croatia. Our presidency of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2013 was just one of many examples of Croatia's active engagement.

Sustaining peace is often as difficult as achieving it. We know all too well that the absence of conflict does not always mean that peace has been achieved. In this highly complex process, which usually unfolds in the face of unforgiving social, economic and legal challenges, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Flexible and tailor-made approaches, based on expertise and a thorough understanding of the given situation, are the productive way forward. Against that background, we strongly support improved data-gathering and analysis capacities within the Secretariat.

Development, humanitarian, human rights and justice actors should receive equal attention in performing their roles. In addition, the active engagement of regional and subregional organizations is often essential. Above all, a proper financial framework must be secured, particularly during the fragile transitional period between war and a lasting peace. We must never lose sight of the fact that, as the Secretary-General states in his report, "Nearly half of all people living in extreme poverty reside in countries affected by conflict and fragility" (*A/72/707, para. 39*). The bleak prospect of that figure rising is, unfortunately, discouragingly likely.

Croatia welcomes the approach suggested by the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture in emphasizing prevention. Peacebuilding should aim both to prevent parties from sliding into conflict and to avoid any resurgence of armed conflict. A solid prevention system could save all of us major resources that could in turn be invested in improving the living conditions of people all over the world, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals represent building blocks for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In this context, I am referring in particular to Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions. If we use it not only as a set of specific targets, but also as an inspiration for adding a new dimension to the other Sustainable Development Goals, we may just find more clarity and a pathway towards eliminating the root causes of conflict and securing lasting peace.

Too often, we have seen the horrific consequences of the lack of a timely and appropriate reaction on the part of the international community to certain crises. Our own national experience testifies to that. A deep understanding of the roots of crises, the ability to read early-warning signs and a readiness to act preventively without hesitation are of the essence. Prolonging the settlement of disagreements and grievances that pose a serious threat to peace and security can often lead to new suffering and injustice, and eventually even to the re-emergence of greater violence. We cannot truly bury the hatchet by simply burying problems. Conflicting sides have to address their differences head-on and in an open manner, while half-solutions are not solutions, merely excuses for postponing or avoiding difficult decisions.

At the end of the day, it is commonalities and people's everyday needs that must be first put into focus, as they are often the key ingredients of success in post-conflict rebuilding. That is even more true of regional reconciliation processes, which means finding ways to build bridges, not walls; including, not excluding; integrating, not separating; and sharing and investing, not dividing and exploiting.

The globalization process continues to rapidly reshape the world we live in. Along with many benefits, it has also created many new challenges and divisions among and within nations. However, Croatia believes that the importance of national ownership and primary-country responsibility can never be emphasized enough.

Policies that provide people with health security, a clean and safe environment, a chance for decent employment, education, modern infrastructure and interconnectivity, and that forge public-private partnerships, all have the additional value of significantly reducing the risk of violent tendencies within and among societies and States. We also feel that all segments of society need to be involved in their development. The role of women and young people in political and decision-making processes is of paramount importance.

On the global level, the United Nations has a crucial leading role across its three pillars. In the more than seven decades of its existence, it has proved its ability to reform and to meet new challenges. We are in the midst of a new comprehensive cycle of reforms that are essential to making the United Nations fit for the twenty-first century. They are not only in the field of peace and security, including peacekeeping operations — and I take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his Action for Peacekeeping initiative — but are also essential to development mechanisms and management. The task before us is huge, as these processes are highly complex and require the broadest possible support of Member States, but they are the only solution.

Finally, as stated in draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted tomorrow, we appreciate the Secretary-General's recommendations and stand ready to discuss them further. We hope that we will be able to achieve considerable progress at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, and we look forward to an in-depth discussion on the peacebuilding architecture review in 2020. In that regard, let us not waver in our resolve to improve our peacebuilding and sustaining peace capabilities, so that they can withstand old and new challenges across the globe.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Arreaza, Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Arreaza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On a day like today, 63 years ago, a conference among African and Asian countries came to a close in Bandung, Indonesia. That conference saw the birth of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). Sixty-three years later, the three fundamental principles agreed on in Bandung — respect for international law, multilateralism and peacebuilding — still prevail. It is therefore an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and President Nicolás Maduro Moros to speak on behalf of the 120 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this high-level meeting on a topic of great importance to our Movement, which has always worked tirelessly to strengthen its role as an anti-war and peace-loving force.

The States members of the Movement would also like to take this opportunity to commend the transparency and inclusion with which the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania, in their capacity as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations of draft resolution A/72/L.49, conducted the negotiation process for its text, which enjoyed the active participation and constructive spirit of our Movement, under the solid leadership of the delegation of Kenya.

We are living in a world facing multiple and complex emerging threats, as well as challenges that threaten international peace and security, which we believe should always be addressed through multilateralism and within the framework of international law. One of the Movement's core objectives is the adoption of effective measures to suppress acts of aggression and other violations of peace, with the aim of defending, promoting and fostering the settlement of international disputes through peaceful means, in a way that never jeopardizes international peace and security, and certainly not justice. We therefore believe that preserving, promoting, achieving and maintaining international peace and security must remain a central priority on the United Nations agenda, which is why the international community should spare no effort in preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

Preventing the outbreak, continuation and recurrence of conflict is therefore a collective responsibility. More importantly, however, it is a national responsibility that could sometimes benefit from the objective, impartial assistance and support that the United Nations is able to provide, upon request, in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and other relevant actors, as appropriate.

Furthermore, the Non-Aligned Movement recognizes that there are various tools at the disposal of the international community and the United Nations for guaranteeing the maintenance of international peace and security, including preventive diplomacy. We stress the importance of using such tools in good faith and not as instruments to interfere in the internal affairs of Member States, and of strictly respecting the principles of international law regarding friendly relations and cooperation among States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We also highlight the importance of the participation and inclusion of all sectors of society in peace processes, including, as the Secretary-General has said, women and young people, who play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and the development of peaceful and resilient societies. Integration is key to achieving progress in national peacebuilding processes and objectives, with the aim of ensuring that the needs of all sectors of society are taken into consideration.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its commitment to promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with Article 2 and Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as with all relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, in order to contribute to strengthening international peace and security and to save future generations from the scourge of war and armed conflict, including by strengthening the role of the United Nations in the peaceful resolution of disputes, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the creation of trust, national reconciliation and peacebuilding, rehabilitation, reconstruction and post-conflict development. In that regard, let us note that, during the eighteenth ministerial meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held just a few days ago in Baku, in Azerbaijan, NAM Ministers stressed that the root causes of conflicts must be addressed in a coherent, well-planned, coordinated and comprehensive manner together with other political, social, economic and development instruments.

They also stressed that the United Nations should give due consideration to the manner in which such efforts are carried out, from the early stages of its engagement in post-conflict situations, and that they should continue without interruption after the departure of United Nations peacekeeping operations, with a view to ensuring a smooth transition to peace and security, as well as sustainable development. In that context, they also highlighted the need to improve synergies between peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities so as to achieve the ultimate objective of sustaining peace.

Our position is highly relevant, given that in most cases the structural causes of conflicts include poverty, hunger, inequalities — including those related to gender — violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, injustice, a lack of jobs and access to education, a lack of accountability and the mismanagement of natural resources. They are all core elements of a comprehensive goal and process to effectively sustain peace.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has taken note of the Secretary-General's focus on enhancing the relationship between the political engagements of the United Nations and peace operations deployed on the ground. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of breaking down silos within the Organization, including with regard to ensuring that peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates and operations are well calibrated within the context of the broader political and development objectives for sustaining peace.

NAM member States have also taken note of the Secretary-General's efforts to bring together his reform proposals for peace, development and internal management into a coherent narrative, as well as his concrete proposals for the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, including the Peacebuilding Support Office, serving as a starting point for the promotion of system-wide coherence on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We also welcome his proposals for enhanced, predictable and sustainable resources that are aligned with effective United Nations approaches and its work on building and sustaining peace. We hope to maintain the momentum created on this occasion and engage in further in-depth discussions to consider all these proposals and recommendations, including their follow-up and implementation, in preparation for the review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020.

In conclusion, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries emphasizes that there can be no development without peace and no peace without development. We must therefore work together, redouble our efforts and improve the synergies between peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, as appropriate, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of sustaining peace. That will be key to fulfilling the commitments made by our Heads of State and Government when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to strengthen universal peace, among other things. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries is fundamentally committed to maintaining, building and sustaining peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Mr. Çavuşoğlu (Turkey): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the group composed of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA).

As strong supporters of sustaining peace and members of its Group of Friends, the MIKTA countries are committed to continue promoting this approach, which represents a paradigm shift within the United Nations system. The identical resolutions on sustaining peace adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)) provide the United Nations with the necessary strategic guidance for implementation. While some progress has been achieved, more is needed.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), as well as its recommendations and options, and take note of its connection to his reform proposals and broader vision. As the report says, sustaining peace is a task that must be assumed collectively and comprehensively by all the relevant stakeholders in an inclusive manner. Meanwhile, national Governments and authorities have the primary responsibility for priorities, strategies and activities. We commend Member States and the United Nations system for their achievements and progress, which have led to real improvements. Examples include coherent strategic planning in mission settings and the support of the Peacebuilding Fund.

MIKTA also wants to highlight the key role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. We reaffirm our support for increasing the role of women in decision-making on conflict prevention and resolution. We welcome the Secretary-General's leadership and commitment to this issue and strongly support his vision.

The support for the new procedural draft resolution (A/72/L.49) on sustaining peace demonstrates the clear expectation of Member States that the United Nations Secretariat, funds and agencies will energetically advance those elements of this issue that can already be implemented without delay. MIKTA countries also look forward to continued engagement with the elements of this issue that require further consideration and steps by Member States. We fully support continued action on sustaining peace.

I would now like to deliver the following statement in my national capacity.

There are many conflicts all around the world, and there is too much human suffering. We cannot continue business as usual — it is time to take action. We more or less agree on the basic parameters. It is necessary to address the root causes, which is where achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will help us. If we cannot prevent crises, we have to intervene at an early stage. We need regional and national ownership to settle disputes and a wider and more effective use of mediation. Our responses must be customized for each case, because a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. The recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace are especially important.

We therefore know the principles. We also have the basic tools. They are not perfect, but we know how to use them. Yet so far we have not been successful. Why? Because, most of the time, the international community is selective in its responses.

When the Al-Assad regime uses chemical weapons to kill women and children, we all react. That is the right approach. When the Al-Assad regime uses conventional weapons to kill women and children, most of the international community stays silent. That is wrong. When the countries that are the five permanent members of the Security Council agree, all is fine. We can enforce international law. When those countries cannot agree, the international system is locked. We can simply forget about international law. When Da'esh kills innocent civilians, we all react. That is the right thing to do. When the Fethullah Terrorist Organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party or the People's Protection Units kill innocent civilians, some countries choose to ignore it, because those terror organizations might be useful to them somewhere else. When there is a terror attack on a Western capital, we see it in the headlines. When there is a terror attack in the Middle East or in Africa, we do not hear about it. Is human life more valuable in certain regions?

Unfortunately, this is the age of hypocrisy. One thing is clear: we cannot build a better world on double standards. We have to take steps to achieve justice, prosperity and, above all, peace. We need a paradigm shift. Let us first put this house in order. Let us start with the United Nations. Reforming it is more important than ever today, and the Secretary-General's reform initiative is timely and appropriate. His effort can address certain problems, and we support it.

However, nothing will be enough as long as the Security Council is dysfunctional. The world is bigger than five nations, but the Security Council in its current form is not bigger than its five permanent members. It functions only if its agenda fits the national interests of the countries of its permanent members. The Council is supposed to bring peace and prevent massacres, but the veto power stops the Council from fulfilling its responsibilities. If we really want to build and sustain peace, the Security Council must be more representative, more transparent, more inclusive, more politically relevant and more democratic.

We welcome the draft resolution to be adopted. Turkey will continue to contribute to sustaining peace, security and stability, but we all need to see action.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development of the European Union.

Mr. Mimica (European Union): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

This high-level meeting represents a landmark in our joint efforts to strengthen the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We welcome the vision of the Secretary-General, as presented in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), pursuant to the 2016 twin resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)), driven by the desire to pursue peace in a more efficient and effective way and with greater impact. We would like to see those efforts continue through this high-level meeting and beyond, as set out in draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by consensus, and we are determined to further implement these objectives and pave the way for the next review of the peacebuilding architecture, scheduled for 2020.

Sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of Governments and societies and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights. We are encouraged by the progress achieved so far, including through the diversified activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, which play a pivotal role in integrating cross-pillar action at the United Nations and deserve the attention and sustained support of the entire membership.

Sustaining peace provides a valuable framework for shaping the United Nations reform agendas on peace and security, management and development into a mutually reinforcing and coherent package. It will require full use of all the political tools at the disposal of the United Nations, including preventive diplomacy and mediation. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace is inherently linked to democratic governance and the rule of law and operate in the context of inclusive political settlements.

As the Secretary-General noted, an emphasis on human rights lies at the heart of conflict prevention, which must be our highest priority. Sustaining peace also requires that human rights and fundamental freedoms be respected, protected and fulfilled. Inclusive economic development and strengthening resilience also lie at the core of prevention. The European Union is keen to pursue closer cooperation and sharing of best practices with multilateral partners. Our cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank on recovery and peacebuilding assessments in a number of post-conflict countries is promising.

We stress the need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations development system in order to address the root causes of instability, vulnerability, exclusion and violent conflict, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We would also like to see stronger linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities, and we stress the important role of the Resident Coordinator in that respect.

Fostering coherence and coordination is one of the golden threads of the global strategy that the European Union adopted in 2016. Last year we adopted a strategic approach to resilience in external action. The European Consensus on Development will also contribute to building the resilience of individuals, societies and States. Our integrated approach provides the framework for a more holistic engagement in external conflicts and crises to promote human security. It involves conflict resolution and mediation and stresses the importance of local ownership, inclusiveness and the sustainability of actions by engaging with national and local authorities, communities and civil society, and it also stresses the importance of a strong multilateral approach.

We welcome the continued emphasis on the empowerment of women and youth and the link between inclusive peacebuilding and engagement at the community level.

We would also like to stress the need to work closely with key international and regional partners. The partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank will be especially important in ensuring that each brings its comparative advantage to sustainable peace, also illustrated by the joint United Nations-World Bank study *Pathways for Peace*.

Peace is the core value and purpose of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations encourages us to take effective collective measures and to achieve international cooperation to strengthen universal peace. The United Nations is meant to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of those common ends. As a staunch supporter of multilateralism, the European Union welcomes the ambition of the United Nations in leading the way in our common engagement to build and sustain peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Maintaining international peace and security and preventing and removing threats to peace constitute the very raison d'être of the Organization. A renewed focus on peacebuilding and sustaining peace is therefore of singular importance in the light of the tensions that we are currently facing, particularly in our region, which has suffered the most from its lingering conflicts and crises.

Preventing conflict in our region requires a focus on the root causes, including the mutually reinforcing afflictions of occupation, foreign intervention and extremism. In addition, efforts to advance illusions of hegemony and attempts to achieve security at the expense of the security of others through exclusion and the creation of blocs have invariably caused tension and conflict, leading to various destructive arms races.

It is therefore now crucial to shift to a new paradigm, based on combining our forces to create a strong region, rather than on any one of us seeking to be the strongest in our region. It means a shift from forming security blocs to accepting security networking. Both these new paradigms are predicated on respect for the interests of all stakeholders, large and small, coupled with a win-win approach. In the current interconnected world, no country's security can be assured by making another country insecure. We believe it is imperative to move away from the current zero-sum paradigm of seeking regional hegemony and exclusion in our immediate neighbourhood, which has witnessed devastating wars in the past four decades. We ask all to join our efforts to advance the goals of a strong region and security networking.

Such a transformational agenda requires accepting and respecting a set of common principles coupled with confidence-building measures. To advance that, we have proposed creating a regional dialogue forum in the Persian Gulf region to overcome the challenge of building and sustaining peace in our region. We invite our neighbours in this volatile strategic waterway, which has seen too many wars, to join us in that endeavour. We expect the United Nations to assist in the process through the arrangements that were envisaged some 30 years ago but never implemented in paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Maas (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting, which could not have come at a better time.

The international community is facing many conflicts and problems. We all know the main ones: climate change, forced displacement, migration and terrorism, to name but a few. We are also seeing a growing divide between those who support openness and tolerance and those who preach isolation and a return to nationalism. And there is a divide between those who believe in the benefits of rules-based international cooperation and those who seek confrontation and refuse to compromise on the world stage. Seldom has the competition for global order been so intense, or the need to work closely together so great.

The inhumane conduct by the Al-Assad regime is an attack on the core values of the international community. We must not close our eyes to it. Violations of fundamental international humanitarian law cannot go unpunished, and those responsible must be held accountable.

The deadlock in the Security Council poses a dangerous challenge to the international community's ability to act. That is why we have to rethink our approach for the future. We must seek dialogue rather than confrontation, invest in disarmament rather than rearmament and focus on prevention rather than intervention.

The international community must demonstrate the ability to act at every stage of a conflict, from prevention and conflict resolution to stabilization, post-conflict peacebuilding and sustainable development. We cannot address conflicts only once they are on the front pages of the newspapers. Nor must we lose our focus too soon, let alone accept frozen conflicts. We need to be resolute in our search for political solutions. Most important, however, we need all involved, and the Security Council in particular, to take on political responsibility. Let me give just one example.

The international community is active in the Sahel region, where it is conducting a wide range of peace and training missions and providing border management support and humanitarian aid. However, those measures will succeed only if the necessary peace and reconciliation processes can be brought to a conclusion that is acceptable to all.

We firmly believe that preserving and enhancing the rules-based order, with the United Nations at its heart, is the best way to create peace. That is why Germany strongly supports the aim of Secretary-General António Guterres to make the United Nations more effective and focus on prevention.

Modern peace policy should be funded in the right way. It is not efficient if peacekeeping missions that cost billions are followed by peacebuilding plans that lack funds. That is why we have responded to the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap. Germany has more than tripled its budget for crisis prevention, stabilization and humanitarian aid, to €2.5 billion in 2017. We were the second-largest donor to the Peacebuilding Fund last year, and will make another large contribution this year. We call on others to play their part.

Germany promotes prevention and a far-reaching definition of security. Germany is aware of the work needed for the challenging transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and actively supports close cooperation among the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Together we shall continue working with the States Members of the United Nations on forward-looking and modern peace policy, something we owe to future generations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Néstor Francisco Popolizio Bardales, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Mr. Popolizio Bardales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting to share perspectives and experiences on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and to strengthen the work of the United Nations supporting Member States in achieving those goals.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Peru's vision of how to prevent and address the conflicts that are currently multiplying throughout the world is fully in line with the concept of sustainable peace, defined as a general objective and a permanent process in the identical resolutions adopted in 2016 by the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)).

In that regard, we consider it essential to incorporate the new paradigm into the work of the United Nations system on the ground. That implies understanding that peace and security, development and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. In particular, it means investing more in prevention activities and paying more attention to the root causes of conflicts and humanitarian crises. We therefore welcome the fact that in many countries affected by conflicts, efforts are already being made, with the assistance of national actors and the support of regional organizations and financial institutions, to realize the holistic and multidimensional vision required for the consolidation and maintenance of peace.

This priority is consistent with our own experience. In its recent history, Peru has effectively confronted terrorism and has established itself as a peaceful and stable country. That is thanks to a broad national consensus on the need to strengthen our institutions, respect the rule of law, promote democratic governance and development and combat poverty and inequality.

In recent decades, therefore, Peruvians living in poverty, who were particularly vulnerable to the violence generated by terrorism, have gone from being more than half of our population to less than a quarter. In addition, there has been sustained growth in our middle class, which today promotes inclusive national development thanks to a responsible economic policy that promoted free trade and investment in democracy. In that context, we Peruvians are optimistic as we prepare to celebrate the bicentennial of our republic in the year 2021, and we are working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which have been incorporated into our public policies.

However, we also face significant challenges. Our country is particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. We have also not been immune to the scourge of corruption, which manifests itself worldwide as a transnational threat that erodes democratic governance and undermines efforts to achieve sustainable peace by diverting resources that should be directed to addressing the causes of conflict. To that end, at the eighth Summit of the Americas, which was just successfully held in Lima, under the leadership of President Martín Vizcarra Cornejo, we prioritized the strengthening of democratic governance and the fight against corruption in our region. That is with a view to relaunching growth and development, which are the foundations on which peace can be built and sustained.

As the current President of the Security Council, Peru organized a high-level briefing (see S/PV.8243) on the Council's role in promoting sustainable peace, and facilitated a new draft resolution (S/2018/373) identical to the one to be adopted by the Assembly (A/72/L.49). Our aim is to supplement this debate and maintain the coordinated work between the two main organs of the Organization.

We live in a highly volatile international context in which tension levels are similar to those of times that we thought had been relegated to history. There is an urgent need for an effective response to the crises in the Middle East, in countries such as Syria and Yemen, and in Africa, as well as to the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, including the issue of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In a world where conflicts and humanitarian crises seem never-ending and enabling to terrorist groups and transnational organized crime, Peru considers it essential to strengthen multilateralism around more coherent, efficient and effective responses.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Peru's commitment and support for the reforms that Secretary-General António Guterres has been promoting with a view to having a United Nations aimed at contributing to the efforts that each Member State is making to ensure that its population develops in an environment of sustainable peace.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Søreide (Norway): The very first point of the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations states that the aim of the United Nations is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Since the beginning, the prevention of conflict has been at the very core of what the United Nations should do, and it still is. But the changing scope and nature of conflicts present a challenge to the United Nations system.

Since 2010, the number of major violent conflicts has tripled. Fighting in a growing number of low-intensity conflicts has escalated. At the same time, United Nations peacebuilding efforts are severely underfunded. This is a fact, but it is also a collective problem. We need to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing in order to make progress with the sustaining peace agenda. That is why Norway is one of the largest donors to the Peacebuilding Fund, and that is also why we are increasing our contributions in 2018.

The recent joint United Nations-World Bank report entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to*

Preventing Violent Conflict clearly shows how and why conflict prevention is crucial. The report also shows the potential for closer collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank. The amount spent on crisis response and reconstruction is about $7 billion a year. But the report also shows that, at present, spending on prevention efforts is less than $1 billion. We must therefore shift some of our focus away from managing and responding to crises towards preventing conflicts from breaking out in the first place. That will save countless lives, but it would also mean that we are spending our resources more wisely. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is both an end in itself and an efficient way to prevent conflict and build lasting peace.

There can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Norway spends approximately 1 per cent of its gross national income on official development assistance, and we will continue to do so. The sustaining peace report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) presents many interesting suggestions about financing peacebuilding. We need to explore those options, including the possibilities of using assessed contributions. The Secretary-General points to the fact that millions of dollars are left unutilized in trust funds or returned unspent to Member States after not being spent in peacekeeping operation budgets. Reallocating those kinds of funds for peacebuilding must be further explored. Channelling assessed contributions towards peacebuilding initiatives does not necessarily mean an increased financial burden but rather a reallocation of existing resources. It could be a smarter way of spending our funds. Together with Indonesia, Norway has mobilized to highlight financing issues in the Peacebuilding Commission, and we are committed to continuing that work. I encourage all fellow Member States to join us.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Srdan Darmanović, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro.

Mr. Darmanović (Montenegro): It is a great pleasure to address the General Assembly at this high-level event dedicated to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. I would now like to make a statement in my national capacity.

I would like to commend the President's firm commitment to devising ways of fulfilling the priorities of his presidency and creating a strengthened and more effective United Nations.

This event comes at a time when there is a pressing need to address fragmentation in the United Nations and the growing unanimity on the importance of building coherence in our collective efforts to address the issue of sustaining peace. Montenegro therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and the draft resolution (A/72/L.49) on the same subject.

The effects of the current conflicts and the complexity of the security situation around the world will be felt for years to come. The time has come for challenges to be addressed more decisively, and we have a shared responsibility to do so. I would like to focus on a few issues that Montenegro finds relevant for peacebuilding and sustaining peace and for our future activities in that regard.

We are all aware that a policy of peace is globally under-recognized, underprioritized and under-resourced. That is especially true for the prevention of conflicts. I would like to underline the significance of the United Nations early-detection and early-warning mechanisms. We believe that changing the perception of a failure to act and shifting to a culture of prevention continues to be essential. That requires political will and leadership from all actors. Investing in preventing conflict is considerably less expensive and more sustainable than merely reacting to crises.

We strongly believe that mediation must receive greater attention and resources, as it is a cost-effective tool. Montenegro is a member of the Group of Friends of Mediation, as well as the Mediation in the Mediterranean Initiative. We are currently planning a conference in Montenegro under the Initiative.

The history of our region has been marked by many conflicts. Our enthusiasm and dedication to mediation and dialogue is a consequence of our direct experience since the time of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. Montenegro has managed to sustain peace, open its borders to thousands of refugees from all ethnic and religious groups, and at the same time consolidate its multi-ethnic harmony from the beginning of the 1990s to this day. In the years that followed the dissolution, Montenegro became an example of how a country's independence could be achieved through negotiations in a peaceful way. Our independence was achieved under the auspices of the European Union, and the current President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, played a prominent role in that process.

As a recent member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Montenegro believes that we could better exploit its potential and enhance its unique and important role. We should also further improve the complementarity between the work of the PBC and the Security Council in order to maximize the impact of the United Nations in preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

If we want to save lives, stabilize countries in crisis, alleviate suffering and protect the vulnerable, we must invest in peace. Building lasting peace requires predictable, sustained and adequate financing to address the root causes of conflict. We strongly believe that the Peacebuilding Fund, with its catalytic effect, is an essential tool in our efforts to achieve that. Partnership with international financial institutions will also contribute to that end.

Cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should also be strengthened, based on the comparative advantage of each. They possess valuable assets, such as a knowledge and understanding of crises, but what is equally important is that they can ensure the involvement and ownership of the countries directly affected.

If we want sustainable peace, we must pursue the values of inclusion, responsibility and diversity. We must support the capacity of women to influence peacebuilding and development policies. In recognition of the fact that women are key actors in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, Montenegro recently joined the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security. We must also invest in young people in order to engage them in the process. One positive example from the region of the Western Balkans, where Montenegro plays an active role, is the recently established Regional Youth Cooperation Office, aimed at reconciliation through joint activities by young people from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. Young people can make an important contribution to preventing and countering extremism. We must understand that achieving the goals of peace and development is about their future, and they should have a crucial stake in it.

We should keep in mind that the risk of extremism, terrorism, organized crime and conflict grows where people have no education and no hope for the future, where there is exclusion and a lack of development. For countries emerging from conflict, with fragile peace, institution-building and reform are crucial.

The contribution and role of the Organization are essential to the maintenance of international peace and security, but that task is not only for the United Nations and other international organizations. The process requires individual, collective and institutional transformation and inclusive development based on the universal values of respect for life, justice, solidarity, human rights and equality between men and women.

Strengthening the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace is our joint objective and responsibility. In a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, we should use a wide range of potential tools at our disposal with focus, dedication and results. We must work together for peace, security and development, and Montenegro is committed to playing its part.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

Mr. Thórdarson (Iceland): I would first like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting.

The situation in Syria and Yemen, the repeated use of chemical weapons, the record numbers of refugees and displaced persons — all worrying examples in our world — demand a new approach.

Unfortunately, we cannot discuss peace and security in this forum without mentioning our disappointment with the work of the Security Council, especially as it concerns Syria. The world body responsible for ensuring peace is hampered by its inability to agree and move forward on its most urgent issues. We must hold the Security Council to a higher standard. Thousands of lives depend on it.

Nevertheless, there are positive things to be said of the work of the United Nations system. Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, the Organization is refocusing its efforts to better ensure peace and security.

We spend massive amounts on peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance in response to conflict. The Security Council decides our peacekeeping budget, which is roughly four times the regular annual budget of the United Nations. The past five years have seen an attempt to address that, and important progress has been made at the policy level, including shaping the concepts of sustaining peace and peacebuilding for the twenty-first century. We have realized that firefighting has limited impact if we then leave the site scattered with the original fire hazards. The fire will re-emerge. Prevention is better, cheaper and saves more lives.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our most powerful framework for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. If we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we will in fact build peace and provide many of the conditions needed to sustain it. Remarkable conceptual work has also been carried out with the three landmark reports relating to peace operations: the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see A/70/95), the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see A/69/968).

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). Iceland strongly supports his analysis. Sustaining peace requires a sustained effort, not only when conflict has broken out, but long before, and then later, following the achievement of peace. That means addressing the root causes, including human rights and governance issues. We also welcome the Secretary-General's strong emphasis on the crucial role of women in sustaining peace and conflict prevention. They must be represented at all levels of decision-making.

The President returned to the Chair.

Through a rigorous and transparent process, we all selected a Secretary-General with a clear vision of what needs to be done to sustain peace. The United Nations is never stronger than its Member States. We are now at a point where the membership needs to step up to the plate and support his leadership.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ditmir Bushati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr. Bushati (Albania): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this high-level meeting, which testifies to the political will of the international community to work together in building a better world. The maintenance of world peace is our common responsibility and our solemn promise enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

But while I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting, I cannot but also reflect on the numerous occasions when we have been confronted with an urgent need to respond to crises with insufficient means, as well as with the impossibility of action, despite the numerous violations and cases of the breaching of human rights across the world. The raging war in Syria is a horrible example of that.

The complexity of the global challenges we face today calls for new, integrated approaches to peace, for innovative ideas and a more effective management of resources and tools. In our view, prevention is the key word. The United Nations needs to establish mechanisms that can identify signs of potential conflicts in order to enable it to act in time. Putting prevention at the heart of the work of the United Nations requires bringing together the three United Nations pillars — peace and security, development and human rights — in a coherent way.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is of paramount importance for sustaining peace, as it is the best way to address the root causes of conflicts through inclusive economic development, democratic governance, the rule of law, justice and equality.

Moreover, Albania is convinced that the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is linked to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Human rights monitoring and analysis can provide a crucial early warning of grievances that, if left unaddressed, may lead to violent conflict.

Albania supports the vision of the Secretary-General for peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the proposals contained in his report (A/72/707). In that regard, I would like to highlight three important points.

First, we support empowering the Peacebuilding Commission as a dedicated intergovernmental platform overseeing and guiding the United Nations system's approach to sustaining peace. It is one of the most important instruments for preventive action on the ground. In addition, an increased and more effective Peacebuilding Fund is needed, as it is one of the most important instruments for financing that preventive action.

Secondly, partnerships should be a key element of our common efforts to build and sustain peace. Peacebuilding processes and regional cooperation are two interconnected processes. The United Nations must draw on the expertise and experience of regional and global key actors, international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector.

Thirdly, women and young people are real assets for peace. We now have mounting evidence that the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes contributes to the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery, counters violent extremism and prevents human rights violations. Similarly, young people can find creative, innovative ways to build bridges and address social and political narratives that drive conflict.

I come from the Western Balkans, a region that in the not-too-distant past was a theatre for major conflicts and human suffering. That is well behind us, and important lessons have since been drawn. Through genuine political will, to which Albania is committed, and thanks to the powerful Euro-Atlantic drive, sound regional cooperation has developed in terms of security, a common market and trade exchanges. A process of dialogue towards the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia has helped narrow mistrust and divisions, leading to increased cooperation and understanding.

We have launched regional initiatives such as the Western Balkans Fund and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, to which all of the six Western Balkan countries are contributing financially and are governing together. We would welcome further United Nations support for this initiative, including from the Peacebuilding Fund.

Together with our Euro-Atlantic partners and allies, we have pledged to make our region part of a consolidated and united continent as a strategic investment in the peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability of Europe as a whole. To that end, as a NATO member State and a European Union candidate, Albania is an active contributor to peace and security around the world, and particularly in those regions where both peace and security are most at risk.

Albania will do its utmost and work to counter any efforts to derail and undermine our common drive for peace and security in the world.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rabbani (Afghanistan): It is an honour to address the General Assembly at this high-level gathering for a comprehensive United Nations approach to achieving a more peaceful world order based on the sustaining peace agenda.

That vision has taken shape in response to the evolving nature of the challenges facing international peace and security. Addressing those challenges demands a more cohesive approach that is better suited to advancing peacebuilding from a more holistic perspective. The new approach correctly focuses on preventing the outbreak, exacerbation, continuation or recurrence of conflicts, as well as addressing their fundamental drivers and root causes. It also highlights the imperative of a more effective development agenda to advance prosperous societies grounded in the rule of law. In our view, the success of the sustaining peace agenda depends on several factors. As a foundational element, States have the responsibility to respect and adhere to the core tenets of the Charter of the United Nations for a rules-based international order. At times, the causes of conflict are distinct, but instability and violence are most common in situations in which international norms are violated. For the United Nations to be more effective, adequate adjustments within the system are essential for optimal output across the peace, security and development pillars. We fully support the Secretary-General's reform agenda and welcome the ongoing progress in that endeavour.

Afghanistan has been a special focus of the agenda of the United Nations. Our strong partnership with the Organization has helped to shore up global support to help us overcome security, social and economic challenges to sustaining peace. Since 2001, we have witnessed the emergence of a democratic Afghanistan, with viable institutions and a vibrant civil society led by our talented and committed young people. Despite security challenges, the National Unity Government is consolidating those gains with the goal of achieving self-reliance. We can say from experience that international engagement in conflict and post-conflict settings should endure until the fundamental factors of instability are resolved and the situation is fully stabilized. That will consolidate peace gains and leave minimal space for a relapse into violence and conflict.

The proliferation of new conflicts and the deterioration of old ones have led to a more fragile international landscape, demonstrating that we need to take steps to correct shortcomings in the area of prevention and in dealing with the root causes of conflict. Although the nature of conflicts can vary, terrorism and violent extremism remain a common security threat in many such situations. Afghanistan is engaged in the simultaneous task of fostering peace while also combating a vicious network of terrorist groups supported in the region, which operate to keep Afghanistan off balance and to disrupt our stability. Decisive action is needed to combat all forms and shades of terrorism, without distinction. The establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is an important development in the context of United Nations reform. We hope that it triggers new levels and modes of cooperation with Member States, especially those most affected by terrorism. The overall focus should be on ensuring timely and proper action in honouring counter-terrorism obligations under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In the area of prevention, more needs to be done to detect and resolve trigger situations before they lead to the outbreak of conflict. Moreover, the United Nations response should be able to adjust to diverse conflict situations, whether internal, regional or international in character.

Proper attention must also be accorded to the imperative of eradicating poverty, generating economic opportunities and embedding a culture of respect for the rule of law. The reform proposals for the United Nations development system can help it to avoid duplication of effort and establish clear parameters for the division of labour. We believe that the design and delivery of development assistance must adjust to evolving situations and new realities on the ground as countries consolidate institutions and designate development goals. We know that adherence to the principle of national ownership has a direct impact on the optimal effects of development aid. Afghanistan has also been a strong advocate of the One United Nations approach, which has gained new focus in the context of the United Nations activities in our country.

Afghanistan is well aware of the complexities associated with the task of peacebuilding. That challenging but noble endeavour will always be dogged by obstacles and setbacks along the way. But we can attest to the fact that, with strong political will, national consensus and international support for peace efforts, success is possible. Under the Kabul process for peace and security, we have spearheaded new momentum in our Afghan-led peace efforts for a political settlement to the current conflict. The peace proposal made by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in February offers new incentives. It also incorporates the principles of national ownership and inclusivity, especially the proactive role of women at all stages of the process, including in decision-making. We are also benefiting from the contributions of civil society and religious figures in the process. That embodies the whole-of-society-approach that has been highlighted in relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. We urge all stakeholders, including countries of the region, to contribute to our Afghan-led and -owned peace process to help generate an enabling environment for direct and results-oriented talks.

In conclusion, the commitments that we make at this high-level meeting will provide a foundation for a more effective international framework for sustaining peace. We must strive to uphold the uniform principles and norms governing international law, and strengthen and expand new partnerships in support of a more effective and coherent United Nations approach. Doing so will certainly help ensure a just and lasting peace that holds and endures for all of humankind.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Igor Crnadak, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Crnadak (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly in convening this high-level meeting on the important topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I also hope that today's discussion will highlight the importance of a more effective and coherent international response to this complex and challenging task.

Today we are facing an increasing number of violent conflicts, as well as diverse natural crises, all over the world. I would therefore like to express my deep concern about the high human cost and suffering caused by armed conflicts in various regions of the world, which also simultaneously show us the significant number of security and humanitarian crises we are facing, despite our repeated genuine determination to save the world from the scourge of war. The nature of crises today demands that the membership of the United Nations build a comprehensive multilateral system that can successfully respond to contemporary threats. To that end, the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace can be viewed as a policy breakthrough and a significant contribution to peacebuilding work.

We reaffirm the primary responsibility of Governments in designing peacebuilding and sustaining peace policies. However, we also need to underline the important role of the relevant stakeholders in the process — United Nations entities, regional organizations, civil society, international financial institutions and the private sector. In that regard, we also view sustaining peace as a practice-oriented, comprehensive concept for preventing violent conflict by addressing the drivers of conflict, the patterns of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the underlying root causes of conflict. Moreover, we see that cooperation among global and regional actors significantly increases the chances of achieving political solutions to crises and sustaining peace.

Development, peace and security, including human rights, are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In that regard, I agree that development is the first and best front line of defence against the risks of violent conflict. For that reason, the Sustainable Development Goals have the potential to become the most powerful connector within the work of the United Nations and could serve as a channel for sustaining peace. In addition, I must stress the importance of redefining the United Nations approach to peace by adopting a long-term perspective and focusing on prevention, without which the peacebuilding architecture cannot be comprehensive. Moreover, mediation is widely recognized as one of the most effective means for prevention.

Institutions in post-conflict countries are critical to sustaining peace and reducing the risk of the recurrence of violence and conflict. Institution-building in such countries is an important pillar of peacebuilding and an issue that must be considered as soon as hostilities cease so as to establish viable and lasting peace. I would like to take this opportunity to share some examples from our experience on the ground.

No one can better understand a situation in a country than the people who live there, without whom no peacebuilding effort will be sustainable. The centrality of national actors is therefore indispensable. After more than 25 years of peacebuilding, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a paradigm for what sustaining peace means in practice. Successful and effective peacebuilding mechanisms were essential to creating a stable future for my country and preventing its lapse or relapse into conflict. Nevertheless, certain elements of our experience can offer additional insights into related challenges and needs for the benefit of future peacebuilding efforts.

Peacebuilding efforts have to be carefully coordinated and introduced at an early stage along with peacekeeping activities. The primary focus should be on the rebuilding and capacity-building of vital national institutions, particularly the rule-of-law and security sectors, while ensuring their resilience. Building legitimate and effective institutions is a matter of years, and sometimes even decades. That is a complex, costly and demanding process, which requires the entire collective political will in coordination with the international community's engagement. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union (EU), together with the United Nations, was among the major partners that played an important role in the process of peacebuilding and institution-building. In addition, the process of EU integration contributed not only to the further strengthening of institutions in the country, but also to better cooperation and dialogue in the region. It is also important to highlight that the period of intervention and assistance of the international community has to transition into a period of support and partnership in building and sustaining peace. The backbone of every peacebuilding effort is made up of the citizens of the respective countries who are open to dialogue, willing to listen to one another and extend respect and support for one another. Fundamentally, only citizens themselves can be keepers of their country, its peace and future prosperity.

I would also like to recall that in 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina organized an open debate of the Security Council (see S/PV.6472) on institution-building in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding. It was our contribution to the ongoing dialogue and an attempt to shed further light on specific challenges and ways to improve our approach to peacebuilding. As a result, presidential statement S/PRST/2011/2 was issued, the first of its kind for that topic.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that promoting the sustaining peace agenda requires not only conceptual work and organizational reform designed to address United Nations weaknesses, but also strong political will. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and especially the Security Council, have critical roles to play in sustaining peace. The catalytic role of the Peacebuilding Fund should also be supported. If properly executed, such actions will help reinvigorate security, legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness, thereby delivering clear peace dividends on the ground. Peacebuilding is a complex and demanding process involving multiple stakeholders and the need to find a balance between achieving short-term results and long-term capacity development. The search for optimal solutions that achieve synergy in that multifaceted endeavour will never end.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. Wallström (Sweden): First of all, I thank you, Sir, for bringing us all together to discuss the important topic of sustaining peace.

I believe that we have an excellent opportunity to advance this important agenda, based on the twin resolutions on sustaining peace (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), which recognize that efforts to sustain peace are necessary not only at the end of a conflict, but long before it, including by preventing conflicts in the first place and addressing their root causes. The real test will be in translating that into change on the ground. As we all know, that requires continued strong political commitment at the highest level from all countries, in the North and the South, both big and small. I would like to outline three core cases, as I like to call them, that must be addressed in order to realize the sustaining peace agenda. The first is the economic case, which means investing in peace. The second involves sovereignty, which means prioritizing inclusion. The third is the regional case, which means supporting reform for the sake of prevention.

First, the economic case for preventing violent conflicts is indisputable. It can save tens of billions of dollars per year. That is reason enough to review our investment portfolios on peace and security. What does it mean for the United Nations? The largest part of the United Nations budget is devoted to the development system. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an integrated framework to address the economic and social drivers of conflict and to build stable societies, including by focusing on institutions, human rights and the rule of law. In order to be agile and relevant in-country, we need to provide adequate and predictable resources. Sweden is one of the largest contributors to United Nations development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, and we are currently in the process of entering into multi-year agreements with the relevant funds and programmes, with continued ambitious, and even increasing, levels of Swedish core support. Core funding is an investment in peace. We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap with regard to the Peacebuilding Fund. We intend to contribute approximately $24 million to the Fund this year. Sweden will more than double its core support in 2018, with an increase of approximately $12 million. We are considering the possibility of forging a multi-year funding agreement with the Fund.

The second case involves combating inequality. In the 1970s, Olof Palme, Sweden's Prime Minister at the time, told the General Assembly that equality within nations is a prerequisite for equality among them. I believe that those words continue to ring true. Building inclusive societies is fundamental to sustaining peace. Equality therefore must be at the forefront of our efforts. Exclusion and discrimination are root causes of conflict that are often overlooked. We have to address all dimensions of inequality. That includes frank discussions about discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or income inequalities, as well as other mechanisms of oppression. Investments in capacity and legitimate national institutions can also bring about strengthened sovereignty.

Sustaining peace and avoiding a relapse into conflict entail reaching inclusive political solutions and addressing the root causes of conflict. That is why, as we have heard from several of the previous speakers, empowering women, young people and children is critical to sustaining peace, and indeed core peace and security business. Harnessing their potential increases the resilience of all societies and benefits all — women and men, girls and boys. Investing in youth and children today prevents the conflicts of tomorrow.

Advancing the sustaining peace agenda requires political will. We must be open to change. The beneficiaries of our work are not in New York; they are at the country level. My country therefore fully supports the principles for reform articulated by the Secretary-General: a country-level and people-centred perspective, gender parity, decentralized responsibility and decision-making, and reformed budget procedures. Key to boosting coherence and avoiding fragmentation is an impartial, independent and empowered United Nations resident coordinator who drives the implementation of a United Nations development assistance framework that rallies all members of a United Nations country team to support national efforts on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I call on fellow Member States to go the extra mile in the current negotiations on the United Nations development system, particularly on the financing aspects. Stronger coordination among development, humanitarian and conflict-prevention efforts in the field is very important.

The United Nations cannot, and should not, do this alone. Partnerships at the regional and subregional levels for early warning and conflict prevention have proved invaluable. A case in point is the Economic Community of West African States, whose well-developed infrastructure should be sustainably supported.

In conclusion, we Member States bear an immense responsibility. That responsibility is to turn the promise of sustaining peace into a reality that touches the lives of those living under the shadow of conflict and violence. However, peace is never inevitable. It is clear that, if we want peace, we must prepare for peace.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations
A/72/PV.84

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

84th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 24 April 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by every speaker to the Assembly's time limits, particularly during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version and to submit the full text to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal. Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended, whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements. Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I appeal for all speakers' cooperation in observing the time limits so that all those inscribed can be heard in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan, Minister of Home Affairs of Bangladesh.

Mr. Khan (Bangladesh): I have the honour to represent our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and to convey her greetings to all participants. I would like to thank the President for his dedicated work in organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is an endorsement of the Secretary-General's call for preventing conflicts and encouraging a surge in peace diplomacy.

Bangladesh's commitment to international peace and security is inspired by our nation's heroic struggle for independence. During our 1971 war of liberation, our people experienced the worst kinds of genocide and crimes against humanity. From the ashes of war, the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, embarked on rebuilding the country brick by brick. He committed us to acting in solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world. That explains why Bangladesh has opened its doors to more than 1 million of the Rohingya who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine state. The massive influx of people is having a huge socioeconomic and environmental impact on Bangladesh. Despite those

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difficulties, our Prime Minister has reached out to that terribly persecuted group of people in a rare display of courage and empathy. She has voiced her confidence that if we can meet the needs of our own population of 160 million people, we can also share our resources with 1 million distressed residents of Myanmar. We thank the international community for recognizing her humane gesture by calling her a mother of humanity and a star of the East.

In her address to the General Assembly last year (see A/72/PV.14), our Prime Minister presented a five-point agenda to address that crisis. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that the report of the Kofi Annan Foundation's Advisory Commission on Rakhine State is implemented fully and unconditionally. Unless it is resolved, the Rohingya crisis could have a far-reaching impact on peace and security in our region and beyond.

Our Government maintains a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism in all forms and manifestations. We are determined not to allow our territory to be used against the interests of our neighbouring countries. We recognize the importance of engaging local communities to resist the forces of violent extremism and radicalization.

Bangladesh has emerged as a trusted partner in United Nations peace initiatives. Over the past three decades, we have adapted our capabilities and performance in response to the complex challenges in peacekeeping missions, including for the protection of civilians. Bangladesh has always spoken out firmly against sexual violence in armed conflict. We believe that United Nations peace operations must be accompanied by sound, determined political processes. Increased and predictable financing for United Nations peace operations must be ensured without diverting resources from development and humanitarian assistance.

We are convinced that there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace. Our Government therefore attaches the utmost importance to combating poverty, scaling up human development and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth. Drawing lessons from our achievements on the Millennium Development Goals, we have mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals into our national development strategies. The United Nations has duly recognized our efforts by declaring Bangladesh eligible for graduation from the least developed country category against all three benchmarks, a first among least developed countries. Yet the effects of climate change may be compromising security and development for many of our people.

The Secretary-General's broad vision for reform, as captured in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), is a step in the right direction. In future, Bangladesh will continue to promote the sustaining peace agenda in parallel with our flagship initiative to build a culture of peace in human minds as a defence against wars and conflicts.

The Acting President: I now call give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana.

Ms. Botchwey (Ghana): Ghana joins previous speakers in expressing special thanks to the President for convening this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, a subject that has engaged the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council in recent years and that emphasizes the centrality of prevention and a long-term view to peace and security. Our meeting is taking place at a time when the world is experiencing an unacceptably high number of violent conflicts, with their attendant human suffering and humanitarian crises. We are all witnesses to the many harrowing stories of the effects of such conflicts on populations, including death and destruction, the forced displacement of large numbers of people and destabilization across regions. My delegation therefore welcomes the normative and conceptual shift to a more proactive, cross-pillar and cross-sectoral approach and strategy for peace and security, as expressed in the related Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Sustaining peace reinforces the fact that peace, security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Ghana shares the view that efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace should interact and be anchored in well-targeted actions aimed at preventing conflicts' outbreak, escalation, continuation or recurrence. In addition, they should address the root causes of conflict, assist parties in ending hostilities and promote national reconciliation, as well as fostering and promoting recovery, reconstruction and development.

The focus on prevention is critical. Ghana firmly believes that a number of measures should be at the core of our efforts, such as strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels, establishing democracy and good governance, building accountable institutions, ensuring access to justice and respect for and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Sustainable development, with a focus on poverty eradication, gender equality and social intervention, should be treated not as a secondary matter but rather as an integral part of building sustainable societies.

The scale and nature of the challenges of peacebuilding and sustainable peace call for close strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations, national Governments and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and subregional organizations. The Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017, is an excellent example of such cooperation. The African Union policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development and the African Solidarity Initiative are some of the positive measures that have been put in place to help build peace on our continent.

Similarly, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States has resulted in some of the most successful intervention efforts in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Ghana is committed to playing a key role in the regional and subregional efforts for peacebuilding and the peaceful settlement of disputes through various means, including preventive diplomacy and confidence-building and mediation efforts.

As a troop-contributing country with a track record of more than 40 years, Ghana is well aware of the role of peacekeeping operations in comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We therefore urge that the peacebuilding components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the special political and drawdown missions be adequately resourced, which will contribute to the stability and continuity of peacebuilding activities.

The role of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace cannot be overemphasized. All Governments should support and enhance women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As the African Union's gender champion, Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, has committed to working for the enhancement of women's representation at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions. Similarly, Ghana calls for conscious efforts by national Governments to seek ways to promote the inclusive participation of young people and the private sector in peacebuilding.

It is also important to emphasize the need for adequate, predictable and sustained financing, particularly for United Nations peacebuilding activities, including through increased contributions, as well as for strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders. Voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund both by Member States and non-traditional donors and other partners must also be actively encouraged. Ghana is deeply concerned about the fact that the total financial resources available to countries affected by violent conflict have dwindled in recent years, despite the fact that nearly half of their populations live in extreme poverty. For that reason, we welcome the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in promoting cross-pillar coordination and coherence in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its link to peace.

Finally, Ghana wants to reiterate how important it is to foster a culture of peace in all Member States, which requires us all — individuals, nations and international organizations — to work together to promote an understanding of our common humanity. We must encourage intercultural respect and strengthen interreligious understanding. We must strive to overcome our differences, promote dialogue and resolve to put peace first. I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm Ghana's strong and abiding belief in the underlying principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to urge support for the Secretary-General's proposed reforms of the Organization's peace and security pillar, as well as the requisite shifts in its management paradigm and the repositioning of its development pillar. The United Nations must be better equipped and made fit for purpose in order to deal with the multifaceted challenges and threats to peace and security in our world today.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Jesus Dureza, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process of the Philippines.

Mr. Dureza (Philippines): I would first like to convey the warm greetings of the Filipino people under our President, Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte. I have a long speech because it covers the work of a lifetime spent on peace work. I have therefore decided to abandon it and just highlight some of the narratives under way in our work for peace in the Philippines today.

First of all, the President is boldly trying to address big issues in our country — corruption, drugs and criminality. However, high on his agenda is how to deal with peace efforts in the Philippines today — and rightly so because, as Member States well know, as we speak today, we are doing a great deal of work towards addressing issues of peace and conflict in our country. As we speak, we are in the process of resuming our work in negotiating a just and sustainable peace with the Communist Party of the Philippines. I say "as we speak", because the President had previously cancelled the peace talks because at the time he felt that there was no environment conducive to the resumption of negotiations. Today, he believes that it is time for efforts to start to resume negotiations. We are also addressing our issues with the Muslim Bangsamoro people in our country, who live primarily in the southern part of the Philippines. We signed agreements earlier but the implementation was ineffective. We are now picking up the pieces again and Congress is working to enact a law to entrench the signed agreements. That work is under way.

However, there are certain things with which we align ourselves. As we have heard other speakers say today, we support the concept of peace and development as a nexus for bringing about sustainable peace. As we well know, there can be no sustained peace without development, and development cannot be sustained without peace. Here I always come back to the dilemma of the chicken and the egg and which comes first. Should it be the chicken or the egg? Some say that it is the egg, while others say that the egg comes from the chicken. The whole issue of peace and development is at the crux of that narrative of the chicken and the egg and of which should come first. Under President Duterte's peace and development road map, they must go hand in hand and at the same time, not one after the other.

In working for development, we must also look through the peace lens. We cannot undertake projects that are also triggers of conflict. That is why it is very important that there be inclusivity in our work towards peace. We know the language of the World Bank concerning so-called moral hazards. We cannot address sustainable peace by giving attention only to the people who are triggers of conflict or who are involved in conflict, because the rest of the people, the majority, will ask why care is being taken of those who are fighting the Government when they, who are peaceful citizens, are left out. Should they also take up arms in order to get the attention of the Government? That is something that is very important in our work for peace.

We have also organized so-called peace tables. In our negotiations with rebels across the table we always tell them that we are negotiating with them but that they are the smaller table, because there is a bigger table outside, which is the public itself. If we address the concerns only of the smaller table, it will be difficult to implement agreements, as we have seen in our country very recently. We must therefore address the bigger table, which is the general public. For example, we have had the experience of seeing the failed enactment of a law to implement and entrench the peace agreement signed with the Bangsamoro. That happened because the public did not buy into the agreement, so the plebiscite — the members of Congress — did not approve it. We are therefore now addressing the bigger table alongside the smaller table.

We must also recognize something very basic about unity and diversity. The Philippines is a very diverse country. We have Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples. They have their own identities and their own ways of doing things. We do not want to mainstream them into one body, one culture and one practice. We must accept and understand that we are different because it is unity in diversity that can bring about a sustainable peace. We should remember that the signing of a peace agreement is not the end of the process. In fact, signing them presents more challenges as we work to implement them on the ground. That is the reason why we are still in the process of working to fully implement the 1996 peace agreement with one Moro group. Agreements are only an initial step — indeed, they present challenges. It is our ability to meet those challenges that will bring us closer to sustainable peace.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the World Bank, the United Nations and the foreign nations that have kept their faith in our work for peace. Many of the peace mechanisms that are now in place in the Philippines today are strongly supported by the United Nations system and its agencies. However, besides the financial support, I would like to mention the importance of the presence of the mediators who facilitate our peace meetings, because we have noticed that during challenging times in the negotiation process, it is not easy for rebel groups to walk away from the table when foreign nations are supporting that peace process. We see our foreign partners as umbilical cords that will keep us together.

We are now dealing with the great challenge of violent extremism not only to the Philippines but to the whole world, as Member States well know. In a recent incident, violent extremism reared its ugly head in a place called Marawi in the southern Philippines. There are many lessons to be learned from that, and we are still dealing with it. We are trying to rebuild following the conflict and the destruction that resulted from it. However, as we know from our experience — and I think that every country shares that — it is very easy to reconstruct buildings and structures but very difficult to restore the structure of social cohesion. The concept of social healing is very important. In that light, we thank the United Nations for bringing about a new paradigm shift that focuses not just on post-conflict rebuilding but now also in investing in preventing the outbreak of conflict altogether. That is why we are grateful, because we in the Philippines have experienced that problem, and we know that addressing it early on, without waiting for incidents of unrest to occur, is more meaningful and valuable in our work for peace.

Working for peace does not happen overnight. I call it peace by piece, one step at a time. This morning, I listened to the President of Colombia when he said that it is a question of laying it down, brick by brick (see A/72/PV.83). It is not a structure that can be built overnight and that we can see immediately, but every year, every country and every Administration must work on every brick. Sometimes one brick may be torn down and broken, but we must just repair it and put it back on our way to our final destination. The work for peace is not an easy road to travel. There are roadblocks. However, there are many ways to peace. We can avoid the roadblocks but we have to stay the course. We would therefore like to thank our foreign partners in our work. The challenge in the Philippines is still ongoing. We hope that we will continue to receive support and cooperation, in particular from the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Czaputowicz (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, for convening this valuable meeting. I would also like to thank this morning's speakers for their thorough and often moving statements. The young generation and women play a crucial role in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We know that children, the most vulnerable members of communities, are still affected by war and conflict in many regions. I agree with today's speakers that development is a key factor in building a safe and prosperous world.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

In the current state of affairs across the globe, preventing conflict and building sustainable peace are difficult tasks for all members of the international community. Unfortunately, internal conflicts, asymmetric attacks and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are our daily challenges. In order to tackle them, we need not only a wide spectrum of activities but also committed actors, including the United Nations, its Member States, regional organizations and civil society. Moreover, our peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities must encompass all three United Nations pillars — peace and security, development and human rights.

In my opinion, most of what the United Nations does locally and regionally boils down to building and sustaining peace. I would like to touch on a few of those activities in the broader context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations. I will turn first to the peace and security pillar. The challenge, scope and nature of current conflicts pose a significant challenge to the universal commitment, grounded in the Charter of the United Nations, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Violent local conflicts and wars often cross national borders and become regional and international issues. International and internal security are interlinked, and effective conflict-prevention activities at the international level can therefore also improve security at a national level.

Poland attaches particular importance to preventive diplomacy and the role of the United Nations in that area. We strongly support the vision and efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to mainstream conflict prevention and sustaining peace as United

Nations priorities. We support reforms designed to strengthen the Secretariat's preventive capabilities, as we believe that it has an important role to play in that regard as well. We are also in favour of transforming the Peacebuilding Support Office into a new department of political and peacebuilding efforts. However, we should bear in mind that the primary responsibility for preventive action lies with States. In that context, we would like to underline the importance of effective national conflict-prevention policies, which include activities such as strengthening transparent and accountable State institutions, fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

Peacekeeping has proved to be an effective tool for the United Nations in assisting countries on the path from conflict to peace. In order to make peace sustainable, we should strive to use all instruments available in a coherent way. The successfully completed peacekeeping operations in Liberia last month and in Côte d'Ivoire last year are good examples of such activities. It will be extremely important to continue to use peacebuilding tools, such as financial grants and capacity-building through the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, for example, in order to reinforce stability and prosperity in those two countries.

With regard to the second pillar, development, its overarching aim is to improve the lives and future prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is now entering its third year of implementation. It helps to create the conditions for inclusive and sustainable development, which in turn prevents further crisis and conflict. In the ongoing discussion about repositioning the United Nations development system with a view to ensuring dignity, prosperity and peace, prevention and sustaining peace must be at the centre of international efforts. The main objective is to properly equip the United Nations to mitigate and end conflicts, address the effects of climate change and reduce their threats to the well-being of people and societies. Poland stands firmly behind such efforts, as we fully agree that sustainable and inclusive development is both a goal in its own right and the world's most productive way to build and sustain peace.

Let me now move onto the third pillar, human rights. There can be no successful peace process without full respect for human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to serve Governments, international organizations, civil society and individuals as a reference point in formulating and implementing human rights treaties, domestic legislation and policies. As a critical milestone in the area of human rights, the Declaration is as relevant today as it was 70 years ago. History proves that whenever universal values enshrined in the Declaration are violated, we run a higher risk of violence and conflict. Only equality, justice and freedom can prevent violent extremism and enable sustainable peace.

Secretary-General António Guterres rightly pointed out in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) that the political will to sustain peace remains crucial. Poland fully supports that statement. I am here today to express the political will of my country to engage actively in the peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts of the Secretary-General himself and the international community as a whole.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs of Kenya.

Mrs. Kobia (Kenya): I would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for convening today's important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I also join other speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive remarks and commitment to peace and sustaining peace as an important tool in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83), and with that to be delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Kenya also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Chair of the PBC.

I would like to affirm Kenya's commitment to promoting universal peace and fostering better relations with our neighbours, Africa and the world. We seek to promote peace and stability in our region as a necessary condition for development and prosperity in all countries, including our own. We believe that to succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we must prioritize our responses, particularly with regard to prevention.

We welcome the draft resolution (A/72/L.49) to be adopted during this high-level meeting as an indication that the Member States want to continue to move the agenda forward and make progress in the areas of peacekeeping, sustainable development and peace, both within the United Nations system and at the country level, with a focus on implementation. We note that, in keeping with the principles of the twin 2016 resolutions — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707) recognizes the primary role of Member States as key actors in the sustaining peace process. But the resolutions and the report clearly underscore that sustaining peace requires adequate, predictable financing. It is therefore important to use all avenues, including the convening and resource-mobilization platform of the PBC, to further consider the proposed financial options and the implications of service delivery on the ground. My delegation believes that if the ongoing reforms of the United Nations are to be truly preventive and focused on sustaining peace, it will be crucial to ensure that all these recommendations, along with the actionable proposals of the three 2015 reviews of the peacebuilding architecture, are integrated and implemented within the continuum of peace operations.

I would now like to highlight three areas where our Government is building and sustaining peace in practice through our national activities pertaining to young people, women and peace operations. Since my delegation gave a detailed statement on youth, peace and security during Monday's open debate in the Security Council (see S/PV.8241), today I would just like to reiterate that article 55 of Kenya's Constitution outlines a framework for investing in young people. Our President has outlined a vision for the social, political and economic transformation of our young people that is being rolled out through a national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), in alignment with his Big Four agenda. I would also like to point to the recently published independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), which calls for broader recognition of young people as partners for peace, describing them as "the missing peace". The study also highlights the unique contribution of civil-society youth organizations, including one in Kenya whose strength lies in using young people's ability to penetrate areas that continue to be terrorist hotspots and militia strongholds in East Africa in order to reach their peers who are divided along religious and tribal lines.

Kenya welcomed the Secretary-General's 2017 report to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2017/861), which recognizes the crucial role of women in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, including their primacy in preventing conflict. In 2016, with the aim of implementing all the pillars of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Kenya launched a national action plan for 2016 to 2018, aptly entitled "To involve women is to sustain peace", which we are still implementing. The plan was built on the relevant national, regional and international instruments that address intersecting areas related to security, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as well as ending impunity with regard to violence against women, promoting gender mainstreaming and protecting human rights.

Lastly, with regard to peace operations, Kenya is a major participant in peace support efforts both regionally and internationally. Our contribution to peace support operations in the region covers the entire peace continuum from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development, including capacity-building and supporting national recovery and peacebuilding efforts. We take pride in our contribution to the process of reconstruction in Somalia, which has taken it from a State with no formal Government to one in which the people of Somalia were able to hold democratic elections in 2016. We also continue to be involved in the High-level Revitalization Forum for South Sudan for reinvigorating the peace process, which was initiated and developed in Kenya. To that end, we call on the international community to honour its obligations and provide the necessary political and financial support to both countries in the process of realizing their aspirations to develop modern, progressive States rooted in democracy.

In conclusion, we look forward to a strong outcome document and a clear reporting line that will inform the next review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020 and also contribute to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly in supporting nationally owned sustaining peace efforts.

The Acting President: Before going further, I would once again like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to maximize the limited time we have for today's high-level meeting. To enable everyone on the list to be heard, speakers should limit their statements in the plenary meetings to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates appreciates the deep dedication of the President of the General Assembly to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and we are pleased to participate in today's high-level meeting. The United Arab Emirates supports the Assembly's forthcoming adoption of a draft resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/L.49) and reaffirms its support for the Secretary-General's reform proposals aimed at enhancing the peace and security pillar of the United Nations.

In this collective multilateral and multinational endeavour, we have learned that peacebuilding is not a one-time action but a continuous effort, combining and deploying the tools of prevention, sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and reconstruction in crisis-affected and conflict-riven countries, as well as post-conflict situations. An effective approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be comprehensive and take into account the specific national context, regional dynamics and international drivers of today's conflicts, and must support national ownership of political, policy and institutional solutions and reforms.

For the United Arab Emirates, our approach to peace has always been long-term and multifaceted, with prevention at its core. That extends to our military involvement. The United Arab Emirates has become an active contributor to our regional security architecture. We are the only Arab nation to have participated in six international coalitions in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Gulf War, as well as in the fight against Da'esh.

With regard to our obligations to reconstruction and aid provision in Yemen as a member of the Arab coalition, the coalition launched a Yemen comprehensive humanitarian operations campaign and expanded the Yemen relief programme with unprecedented humanitarian aid funding for distribution across United Nations agencies and international relief organizations. Through our extended commitment to Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons, since 2012 we have provided them with more than $861 million in emergency assistance in order to help them better integrate into their communities. Through our rebuilding of Government institutions in Iraq, we have helped to consolidate the rule of law, restore services and preserve the heritage of areas liberated from Da'esh. This includes the pledge of the United Arab Emirates to help rebuild Mosul's Great Mosque and Al-Hadba minaret, which were destroyed by Da'esh in 2017.

In all that we do to foster durable peace around the world, we remain deeply committed to political resolutions and the United Nations-led processes that underpin them, particularly in Libya, Syria and Yemen. We know that a surge in diplomacy for peace such as the Secretary-General has called for is a critical pillar of any conflict-prevention strategy. Furthermore, a key aspect of any effort to prevent conflict and build peace must be a focus on multilateral efforts aimed at ending the financing and support of extremism and terrorism. This is why the United Arab Emirates, along with its partners and allies, has taken measures to stop these countries and end the policies that have destabilized our region. And it is not just in our region that we are trying build peace. We are providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced Rohingya and are gravely concerned about their persecution.

Our peacebuilding efforts are also based on partnerships and on supporting the empowerment of the people, especially young people and women, in participation and decision-making. Our foreign policy is predicated on our country's core principles of education, inclusiveness and tolerance. To that end, we offer our experience as a progressive, modern Arab country that empowers women and young people through dedicated institutions and concrete policymaking in order to provide a unique model for developing peaceful societies that are resistant to nihilistic ideologies.

In conclusion, the key to preventing, managing and responding to conflicts will be to effectively scale existing efforts to the needs within the peacebuilding continuum. To that end, the United Arab Emirates urges United Nations agencies and Member State partners to take collective action to identify countries that support and finance terrorism and hold them accountable; consult with national and regional actors to improve policy coherence and implementation; use data to make evidence-based assessments for sustainable financing for crisis prevention and conflict-management activities and, finally, deepen global strategic partnerships as force multipliers for impact.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tudor Ulianovschi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Ulianovschi (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Just outside the United Nations building there is an iconic sculpture by the eminent Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd of a giant revolver with a knotted barrel and a muzzle pointed upwards. It is a powerful symbol of non-violence and peace that represents the greatest desire of humankind and the fundamental goal of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations commands us to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. And yet, more than 72 years after the founding of the United Nations, the world is withering under devastating conflicts, while military might is used with such cruelty that we can hardly believe it is happening in our time or that this is the legacy that our generation is leaving humankind. Meanwhile, the United Nations has expanded greatly, becoming the largest such organization in the world, with an intricate network of bodies and regulations created for the purpose of assisting countries in avoiding conflicts, enabling their peaceful coexistence and supporting development. Yet far too often we realize that this network has grown inefficient and that we have fallen into a trap of rigid formality that drives us further and further from the original goal of the United Nations — international peace and security.

It is now time to reverse that trend and return the Organization to its original purpose — to prevent conflicts and promote peace. An effort to focus on those paramount priorities and align the internal capacity of the United Nations in order to effectively address international peace and security challenges is long overdue. We cannot afford to stay idle and live with an inefficient system at a time when some countries and regions are consumed by violent hostilities, while others are held back due to protracted conflict situations. We believe that no conflict in the world should be overlooked by the United Nations, irrespective of whether it is on the Security Council's agenda or not. The protracted conflict situation in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, a problem that is also exacerbated by an illegal military presence on our national territory, is one such problem. The lack of progress in settling protracted conflicts and the continuing illegal presence on others' national territories of States Members of the United Nations, as is the case in the Republic of Moldova, require more direct involvement on the part of the appropriate United Nations bodies.

The use of preventive diplomacy to pre-empt conflicts, protect States' sovereignty and integrity, strengthen security and preserve peace is a basic enabler for the application of the guiding principles of the Charter. Sustaining peace is not the sole responsibility or prerogative of one body or one institution. It is a shared responsibility of the entire international community, underpinned by respect for international law, human rights and democracy. It is also a shared interest of all nations seeking to build peace through inclusive processes. For that reason, I would like to commend the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to strengthen a culture of conflict prevention throughout the Organization as a concept and practice of the United Nations. We view the proposals for reforming the United Nations peace and security pillar as an ambitious step in tackling the problem of the unsustainable costs of managing crises and cutting the ties of institutional restraints and inefficiencies that prevent the Organization from taking a proactive approach to conflicts.

The ongoing challenges of the global security environment demand a comprehensive response by the United Nations, with an integrative vision in which peace, security, development and human rights are closely interlinked. In that regard, I would like to welcome draft resolution A/72/L.49, on the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), to be adopted in the framework of this high-level meeting. It will be important to build on this momentum and further explore the recommendations and their implementation in a way that responds to the vision of a more effective and nimble United Nations in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Moreover, the ongoing discussions on the reform of the United Nations development system go hand in hand with the proposed restructuring of the peacebuilding and security pillars. All these initiatives are crucial, since they aim to respond to the need to strengthen the system-wide capacity to address the root causes of conflicts and build resilience while placing prevention at its centre.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that this meeting will foster greater unity among Member States in supporting efforts to institutionalize a culture of prevention within the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, who will speak on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus.

Ms. Baeriswyl (Switzerland): I am pleased to be speaking today on behalf of the members of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus: Albania, Canada, France, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and my own country, Switzerland.

The Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus is a cross-regional group of States Members of the United Nations that calls for using the full potential of the Organization's human rights instruments to prevent conflicts. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. We also recall the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments. Furthermore, we affirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis.

This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was created in response to violent conflict in order to help to prevent such conflicts in future. In addition to embodying the international community's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all individuals around the world, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the treaties that derive from it are, in the words of the Secretary-General, the best prevention tool we have. Indeed, human rights are at the heart of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General reiterated that point in the Human Rights Council in February 2018 and said that making it a reality "must be our highest priority". We strongly support his statement. Human rights violations and abuses can be both the cause and consequence of violent conflicts. While the most egregious human rights violations and abuses often happen in conflict situations when civilian populations, including women and children, are particularly vulnerable, they are also an indicator of potential instability or the escalation of a conflict.

We welcome the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to mainstream the promotion and protection of human rights in all United Nations activities. This is important for sustaining peace and for advancing sustainable development. Such United Nations human rights tools as monitoring, reporting and analysis can provide key early-warning signals and help to identify and address the root causes of conflict, discrimination and inequalities. This should prompt an effective and early United Nations response. We appreciate the persistent efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office aimed at highlighting situations of serious human rights violations and abuses and providing support to States in protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights. We also believe that Member States should make full use of the interlinkages among the three pillars, as well as their mutually reinforcing nature, in order to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of United Nations conflict-prevention and sustaining-peace activities.

We firmly believe that the Human Rights Council can play a more important role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and that significant progress can be achieved within the current institutional setting and with the instruments currently available to us. We therefore call on all Member States to foster and enhance communication and exchanges between the Human Rights Council and the rest of the United Nations system, in particular the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and their respective bodies, mechanisms and members, in order to ensure that United Nations human rights work is given optimal consideration in United Nations conflict-prevention and sustaining-peace activities. The Caucus is committed to making active use of its membership in all relevant bodies of the United Nations in order to put human rights at the heart of conflict prevention and make conflict prevention a reality.

(*spoke in French*)

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

For Switzerland, sustaining peace requires developing a common vision for society. When I think of the history of my own country, that shared vision has been key to ensuring a long period of peace. After a history of major religious, regional and social differences, in 1848 the Swiss people created their first federal Constitution. It lays out fundamental principles that have been developed and perfected over the intervening years, despite relapses and obstacles. Including all population groups in the development of a shared vision is a process that continues to this day and that also includes an ongoing partnership between politics, the economy and civil society, or, as Albert Einstein said,

(*spoke in English*)

> "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."

(*spoke in French*)

Our foreign policy is therefore logically guided by these same principles. I am pleased that the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) anchors this principle in the United Nations system and has already been able to present the initial results of its implementation. Three elements of the report are crucial to achieving a common vision for a society — respect for fundamental rights, coherence and partnerships.

First, the best prevention is respect for the standards that we have all agreed on, such as the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international humanitarian law. Switzerland's commitment to accountability and transitional justice is part of this logic. A Swiss initiative that is close to our hearts in this context is the appeal of 13 June 2016, which called for the full use of the preventive potential of human rights instruments.

Secondly, at the multilateral level, it will be impossible to achieve sustaining peace without greater coherence within the United Nations system. The ongoing reforms will be crucial to implementing that, which is why, in these discussions, Switzerland places particular emphasis on strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator and supports providing it with sustainable, innovative and predictable funding.

Thirdly, with regard to partnerships, the example of the Gambia shows the added value of close cooperation among all stakeholders. That country's experience shows that a peaceful political solution can be found through a joint effort at the national, regional and multilateral levels. The situation in the Gambia has demonstrated the prime importance of rapid regional mobilization in support of national conflict-prevention initiatives. The joint efforts of several stakeholders, including Switzerland, in the immediate aftermath of the peaceful resolution of the post-electoral crisis provided decisive support for the new Government's efforts to sustain peace.

The procedural draft resolution to be adopted (A/72/L.49) will guide us through the next steps for implementing the concept of sustaining peace. I can assure the Assembly of Switzerland's committed support in this debate. Too often, we are satisfied with simply managing conflicts. Today I urge us to become true champions of peace.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Baron Tariq Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and United Nations of the United Kingdom.

Lord Ahmad (United Kingdom): The world today is experiencing greater instability and a wider range of threats to peace than we have seen in a generation. The scale of violent conflict, and the desperate human suffering it causes, is immense. If we are truly to realize the ambition of the Charter of the United Nations, which was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, then the need for peace, and the real motivation to prevent further conflict, is as great as it has ever been. That is why the United Kingdom very much welcomes Secretary-General Guterres's vision for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and particularly the renewed focus on conflict prevention that is set out in his report (A/72/707). We also fully endorse the idea that sustaining peace should be a shared priority across all the pillars of the whole United Nations system, from peace and security to development and human rights.

We have summarized the key elements needed to successfully sustain peace into four clear and memorable pillars, which we could term the four 4-Ds approach. The first is diversification: diversification of the tools the United Nations deploys to promote and sustain peace. The second is development: more effective development interventions to address the drivers of conflict. The third is diplomacy: active diplomacy aimed at de-escalating crises and creating the political conditions necessary to ensure long-term peace. Finally, the fourth element is delivery: efficient delivery, in partnership with others. In that regard, the United Kingdom has identified three key priorities. The first is developing a stronger partnership for peace between the United Nations and the World Bank. Their combined vision, expertise and global presence are essential to ensuring multilateral investments in development that can tackle the drivers of conflict. The second is encouraging more preventive diplomacy within the United Nations, because we all know that political agreements are the bedrock of effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The third is ensuring smoother transitions to and from in-country peacekeeping missions to other United Nations entities, through earlier, better and more effective planning.

For the United Kingdom, those three priorities are underpinned by our wider commitment to a broader, values-driven protection agenda. In that context, the work of the United Nations in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and preventing sexual violence in conflict is extremely important. Indeed, it is personally important for my Prime Minister, Mrs. May, and for me as her representative on the issue of preventing sexual violence. The United Kingdom plays a leading role in those two issues. And, of course, sustaining peace is part of the wider United Nations reform agenda, which the United Kingdom also supports. As we look to the future, we need to be more creative in finding ways to broaden the donor base for peacebuilding and to deliver more thorough solutions through the partnerships that the United Nations enjoys with a wide range of organizations. As a leading contributor to peacebuilding over many years, both politically and financially, the United Kingdom stands ready to support the processes set out in draft resolution A/72/L.49, so that together we can work effectively to sustain peace, and together we can create a world in which future generations are saved from the scourge of war.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Asim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

Mr. Asim (Maldives): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the President of the Assembly for convening this high-level meeting, which provides an important platform for building a constructive dialogue between States and various other actors in order to enhance our collective efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania for guiding the negotiations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in an inclusive and transparent manner.

The United Nations system is the institutional expression of the international community's determination not to allow a repeat of the mayhem that characterized relations between States in the first half of the twentieth century. In establishing the United Nations, we as a global community vowed to learn from the mistakes of the past and do what is necessary to maintain international peace and security. For far too long we have viewed that as a matter of responding to conflicts. But if we are forced to respond to conflicts only after blood has been shed, we have fallen short of our responsibility. The focus should definitely be on preventing conflicts and ensuring that they do not erupt again where peace has been achieved. Preventing conflicts is not only morally right, but less costly, too.

Since joining the United Nations in 1965, the Maldives has closely followed the discourse of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Small as we are, 52 years ago we committed to contributing whatever and however we can to the cause of peace, and we have maintained that commitment ever since. The challenges that we face today are in many ways the same, but they are also different and new. Inter-State and intra-State conflicts rage on in many parts of the world. At the same time, non-traditional threats such as environmental degradation, drought, famine and the effects of climate change are all leading to instability, undermining peace and endangering our society and our security. The case of climate change is a ready example. The Security Council has already recognized climate change as a cause of potential conflict, most recently in the Lake Chad region and in Somalia. We should therefore consider in more detail the impact of climate change on conflict and how to design responses to such challenges.

The Maldives believes that when the United Nations considers conflicts and potential conflicts it must take greater account than it does currently of the potential that such non-traditional threats have to undermine peace and security. For that to happen, we believe that there should be greater cooperation and dialogue between the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other subsidiary bodies, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, in order to improve the flow of information and enable more informed decision-making. That improved coordination will help to prevent conflict and sustain peace in a more holistic manner.

Conflicts do not begin with killings. They start, for instance, with hate speech, inflammatory rhetoric and the demonization of one side by another. In order to prevent violence, we need to address those precursors to violence. We must build bridges across the religious and cultural divides that too often lead to misunderstanding and violence. We must construct counter-narratives that use truth, modernization, moderation and education to combat pseudo-ideologies that promote violence and terrorist and extremist propaganda. We must address extreme poverty, ignorance, despair and hopelessness, which are often breeding grounds for terrorist recruitment. It is essential to find holistic approaches to countering terrorism, preventing conflict and sustaining peace. That is why the link between peace and development is clearly outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Secretary-General's proposals for sustaining peace. We must bring the currently fragmented efforts together to facilitate a more holistic and efficient approach to preventing conflict and peacebuilding, and nowhere is that cooperation and approach more essential than in post-conflict situations.

In most intra-State conflicts it is the weakness of a State or State failure that facilitates conflict. The Maldives believes that the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations should work together to build States' capacities so that they are able to maintain order, strengthen institutions and promote democratic norms. It is only when State institutions have the necessary capacity and resilience to establish a democratic order conducive to peace that stakeholders will have an incentive to choose the cause of peace, and it is only then that the people of the country will be able to enjoy peace dividends.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace are a collective responsibility that should be shouldered by States, civil society, international organizations and, more importantly, the United Nations. The process of building and sustaining peace is a partnership. The significant progress that can be achieved through successful partnerships at the national, subregional, regional and global levels has been demonstrated at the United Nations in the context of development. Strengthening and building new partnerships in the context of sustaining peace has the potential to deliver the same results.

It is an observable fact that small States have very narrow opportunities to participate in key decision-making about peace and security in the United Nations. The Maldives will change that pattern if it is elected to the Security Council for a 2019-2020 term in the elections to be held in the Assembly on 8 June. If elected to the Council, the Maldives will prioritize preventive diplomacy. We will examine the effects of new and emerging threats on peace and security. We will ask the United Nations system to help countries strengthen their capacities to build and maintain peace, and we will advance sustainable development as an instrument for sustaining peace. To be able to do that, we must uphold the principle of equitable geographical distribution laid down in the Charter of the United Nations when we elect members of the Security Council. We need to work together. Small States and small island developing States — indeed, the entire United Nations membership — should join hands to achieve the Charter's inclusiveness and vision, and should give a chance to the Maldives to craft lasting, shared solutions for our shared destiny.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ildefonso Castro López, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

Mr. Castro López (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations is, as King Felipe VI stated two years ago from this same rostrum, the universal forum for peace and progress for humankind (see A/71/PV.10). Spain would like to thank the President for his initiative of holding this high-level meeting on sustainable peace. The reforms proposed by Secretary-General Guterres and the measures proposed, in particular with regard to the Peacebuilding Commission, are an essential step towards achieving sustainable peace, and Spain fully supports them.

It is difficult to define peace. For Spain, living in peace means living without fear — without fear of exclusion, without fear that the rule of law, the law or our dignity as individuals will be violated with impunity, and without fear of the future. There are three components to sustainable peace.

First, peace is possible only if it is inclusive. Exclusion creates distrust and leads to conflict. But in many cases, being inclusive is neither easy nor clear-cut. It is our duty to support the quest for appropriate ways to promote universal participation. To take two specific groups that my country has prioritized, women and young people, the women and peace and security agenda has ensured that women are no longer seen merely as victims but as key stakeholders in preventing and resolving conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction. The reform of the peace and security pillar is an ideal opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of that agenda, and we must do so. Furthermore, we cannot speak of a future free of conflict without involving young people, as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth reminded us this morning (see A/72/PV.83). Spain is taking concrete steps to ensure that young people have the spaces and tools to enable them to play a positive role in prevention and mediation, the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the fight against violent extremism.

Secondly, Spain cannot conceive of the possibility of peace without full respect for the rule of law, which guarantees the separation of powers, the primacy of the law, the principle of legality and the promotion and protection of human rights. In 2018, Spain began its term as a member of the Human Rights Council. We see our election to the Council by the General Assembly as a recognition of our country and our society's strong commitment to human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Peace can never be sustainable without full respect for human rights. Mass and flagrant violations of human rights are a serious threat to peace, and the international community — each of us — must assume its responsibility to protect the victims. In addition, mass violations of international humanitarian law sometimes have such profound consequences that even when peace is achieved they prevent it from being sustainable. That includes, in particular, the shocking trend of making military targets of health workers and their facilities, or schools and their students. That is why Spain is firmly committed to achieving tangible results that advance the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical assistance during conflicts. I am also pleased to announce that Spain has expressed its intention to host the third International Conference on Safe Schools, in 2019. We call on all Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. Both initiatives are aimed at strengthening the preventive aspects of the enforcement of international humanitarian law and, ultimately, at promoting sustainable peace.

Finally, peace requires confidence in the future. It is not static. It evolves, and not always in the way we would like it to, much to our chagrin. It often mutates into new conflicts, more complex than those that came before. That is our main challenge — combining the efforts of all stakeholders in order to guarantee sustainable peace. Let us work for that goal. Spain is ready to do so.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrej Logar, State Secretary and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would first like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly, for convening today's high-level meeting and providing us with this opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Slovenia also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). We commend his determination and tireless endeavours to strengthen the Organization in a more efficient, effective and impactful way. We also fully support his endeavours in conflict prevention, as well as sustainable peace, and we encourage him to continue.

Sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of Governments and societies, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — and through all the stages towards achieving sustainable development. For that, the United Nations must be on the ground, and must be effective and accountable. The entire Organization must be involved. When the United Nations works together across all three pillars and with the relevant partners, a meaningful difference can be made in people's lives. Respect for human rights is a precondition. Without that there can be no peace, security or development.

The role of the United Nations in prevention should be central. Slovenia fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to bring prevention into the spotlight. Anyone who thinks that the cost of prevention is too high should remember that no cost is higher than that of human lives. In partnership and cooperation with the United Nations, Member States can play an essential role in preventive diplomacy. One way to approach prevention can be through addressing the role of water as a factor in preventive diplomacy, especially in cross-border and cross-regional cooperation. We welcomed the recommendations of the report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, *A Matter of Survival*, which were presented here in New York in September 2017. The global water challenge is not only about development and human rights, it is also about peace and security. It is therefore a matter of urgency to address it in an integrated and comprehensive manner at every level.

Building societies' resilience is another way to work for sustainable peace. Only a society that is resilient in the face of external and internal pressures can provide a stable and peaceful environment for its development and people. In order to help foster the resilience of societies that are fragile or are in conflict or post-conflict situations, they first need assistance that links security with humanitarian and development approaches. The process must be national and people-centred. With the aim of helping to rebuild safe environments after armed conflict, Slovenia established a humanitarian organization, the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF). Over the past 20 years, ITF has successfully managed more than 3,000 programmes and projects, demined almost 150 million square metres of land, cleared areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance in South-Eastern Europe, Lebanon and Azerbaijan and provided rehabilitation treatment for more than 1,000 mine survivors from the Western Balkans, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa.

As soon as possible after an armed conflict ends, the international community, led by the United Nations, must step in and work to achieve a comprehensive approach to peace by including all stakeholders, as well as taking regional issues into account. We must not forget that even though the majority of conflicts are not international, their consequences can spill over. Cooperation within a region, and between the United Nations and regional or subregional organizations, is key. And special attention must also be paid to the issue of gender equality throughout the process.

Effective peacebuilding and peacekeeping must involve the entire United Nations. Mandates must be robust but still flexible enough to ensure that their focus is on protecting and assisting the civilian population, and must have the capacity to help lay a foundation for sustainable peace. That demands well-trained personnel, appropriate equipment and an exit strategy.

All efforts to achieve sustainable peace must be based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. Respect for international law is the very foundation of international peace and security, and sustained peace can be achieved only by ending impunity. The approach must be comprehensive, and reconciliation must play an important role. Slovenia has always been at the forefront of countries in advocating for the administering of international criminal justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC), which needs more support from bodies that can, should or must cooperate with it, including the Security Council. With regard to ensuring an end to impunity, we also support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

Slovenia has a lot of experience in post-conflict peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Western Balkans. Irreversible stability, reconciliation and sustainable development are impossible to achieve without positive prospects for young people. In that context, Slovenia has launched a positive agenda for the youth of the Western Balkans, aiming at promoting mobility, solidarity and common understanding among young people in the region and thereby contributing to overall reconciliation and the reform efforts of the international community, especially the European Union.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Lemoyne (France) (*spoke in French*): Winning a war is one thing, winning peace is another, and avoiding war is yet another. Where the last two are concerned, prevention is at the heart of the solution. That is why France welcomes today's debate on an important topic for the international community.

In the past few years there have been significant advances within the United Nations in dealing with crises and the United Nations approach to them. It has been a long time since the sole involvement of the United Nations in crises was through peacekeeping operations, even if such operations remain a strong symbol of United Nations action. We are all aware of the work of the men and women who serve as Blue

Helmets. France fully and wholeheartedly supports the Secretary-General's peacekeeping reforms, as I had the opportunity to underscore at the Security Council meeting on the subject on 28 March (see S/PV.8218).

The main conclusion is simple and widely shared and has been mentioned by many speakers today. Peace and development are intrinsically linked. Many conflicts and civil wars have their origins in the same development and governance issues that are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The twin resolutions of 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) enshrined that paradigm shift, which takes the underlying causes of conflicts into account in dealing with them and in rebuilding countries emerging from them. That was the approach taken in Côte d'Ivoire, in close cooperation with the Ivorian authorities, in order to enable an orderly withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the rebuilding of the country's institutions. Côte d'Ivoire's current membership of the Security Council is an undeniable symbol of that success. If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who left us so suddenly, and through him to the Permanent Representatives of our countries, who are the true linchpins of multilateralism here today.

To return to the topic at hand, more recently, the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, developed with the support of the Peacebuilding Commission, has also enabled its successful transition and the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Even now, I can see in my mind's eye the images of a stadium in Monrovia, packed with people, young and not so young, full of joy and enthusiasm as power was transferred from President Sirleaf to President Weah. We could see that the stadium that had witnessed atrocities only a few years earlier was now witness to hope restored.

To guarantee lasting peace, we must ensure that no one is left behind. We must enable the most vulnerable countries to develop their own capacities so that they are able to provide concrete responses to their weaknesses by combating unemployment, particularly among young people; overcoming the lack of public services and public infrastructure; establishing inclusive governance and strong institutions; promoting a judicial system that allows everyone access to quality justice; ensuring respect for human rights and mitigating tensions over natural resources. The current situation in Syria is a clear demonstration that there can be no lasting solution to the conflict there without taking these elements into account in a settlement and without a serious commitment to an inclusive political solution.

France supports a cross-cutting and integrated approach that over time involves action on the security, humanitarian, political and development fronts, as well as in combating climate change, and that brings together all partners in a common approach, such as the one we have adopted in the Sahel, for example. Only a little earlier today, together with Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and many of those who are here today, we talked about the joint efforts of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and of the Alliance for the Sahel. It is exactly that approach that guides the concept of sustaining peace that the Secretary-General wants to place at the centre of his action, which we welcome and fully support. Sustaining peace is fully consistent with the Secretary-General's reforms in the areas of peace and security, the management of the United Nations and the development system. Those three reforms form a whole that we cannot consider separately. The Secretary-General can count on France's resolute support in that undertaking.

We also support the Organization's willingness to give more resources to the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund has shown its added value and has intervened at critical moments, for example in the Central African Republic. Incidentally, France decided last year to contribute to the Fund again, after several years' absence. It is essential that through that increased strength, an objective that the Secretary-General strongly affirmed this morning (see A/72/PV.83), we can preserve the flexibility and responsiveness that are so crucial to the functioning of the Fund.

France is now taking very concrete steps to implement the concept of sustaining peace, partly through a large-scale recommitment to official development assistance (ODA), since the numbers demand it. Over the past 10 years, the ODA to conflict-affected countries has fallen by more than 10 percentage points and the ODA for financing peacebuilding in those countries has dropped by five points. We have therefore responded by increasing France's ODA commitment from 0.38 per cent to 0.55 per cent of our gross national product.

The second element in our implementation is France's development of a strategy to combat fragile situations and respond to crises, with the aim of achieving lasting peace in fragile countries by implementing the 2030 Agenda. The strategy focuses on restoring or strengthening the social contract between the State and society. Interministerial coordination, technical assistance and cooperation and partnerships between civil society in countries of the South and research institutions, for example, are key elements in the strategy's implementation.

We have established a peace and resilience fund, funded through our financial transactions tax, and aimed at financing initiatives in regional crisis hotbeds. It is a very specific example of the use of innovative mechanisms to ensure the sustainable financing of activities for a lasting peace. In 2017 four initiatives were launched, to be supported by the fund, for the areas of Lake Chad, the Western Sahel, the Central African Republic and the Middle East, designed to help them respond to emergencies, reduce their vulnerability to crises and strengthen the resilience of their populations and institutions. The amounts allocated to the fund will be doubled by 2020. France will also work to strengthen support to the private sector in areas of vulnerability and crisis, which is essential to long-term involvement in building and sustaining peace.

As several Member States said, we are at a turning point. The term "turning point" frequently comes up in our debates. While the demand for conflict prevention and the links between peace and development have become clear, it now falls to the international community — that is, all of us here — to translate that will into action. It is one thing to make statements from the rostrum; it is another to be able to respond effectively on the ground, despite the fact that the two should be one and the same. France will therefore contribute fully to the discussions on the Secretary-General's recommendations for effectively implementing sustaining peace in a constructive spirit. We will continue to follow a resolute policy in that regard, whether on the ground or as part of our responsibilities to the United Nations.

That is the spirit in which Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, took the initiative to organize a peace forum to be held in Paris on 11 November. Its objective is to learn lessons from past tragedies. That date marks a century to the very day since the end of the First World War, in which so many soldiers and civilians died in conditions that we do not want to see again but that unfortunately sometimes recur. That is unacceptable. Let us therefore reflect together on the conditions we need for a global governance based on effective multilateralism. As the Assembly knows, there is a well-known Latin proverb, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, which means "If you want peace, prepare for war". Perhaps we should change it to "If you want peace, prepare for peace". This is not about smug pacifism but about building effective multilateralism. I know that is what we are all committed to.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Muraikhi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Qatar would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, and we support both of them in their efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Peacebuilding is key to Qatar's policies. We believe in peace, and we believe that it can produce results. Our region has undergone many crises and conflicts, for which we have had to pay a heavy price. However, we continue to believe in the crucial importance of the possibility of achieving peace. We have a global vision and a number of priorities, including systematic, organized efforts designed to prevent conflict, as well as other priorities aimed at promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We try to support all institutions that can foster peace. In that context, we believe that education facilitates peacebuilding. Qatar has therefore helped to strengthen the education systems of a number of countries around the world, including in areas of conflict. We have enabled the provision of education services to more than 10 million children — indeed, to tens of millions, all over the world. We have tried to empower millions of young men and women everywhere, but especially in our region. We work with the United Nations to strengthen the abilities of young people and to enable them to escape the scourge of terrorism and extremism. At the same time, the State of Qatar has focused on mediation as an essential tool to prevent and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, and has also participated in resolving many conflicts in coordination with the United Nations. We have often underscored the importance of improving education to that end.

The State of Qatar has made great progress towards sustaining peace, while ensuring that the dignity and rights of everyone living in our country are protected, which is why our levels of human development are some of the highest in the world, according to several global indicators.

In our view, today's crises and conflicts are the result of a failure of the rule of law and of respect for international law, as well as of violations of States' sovereignty and disregard for their choices and decisions, and of failed justice systems, corruption and marginalization. In order to achieve peace, therefore, we must reject all policies that threaten and violate the sovereignty of States. We must avoid creating fabricated crises and work to avoid such policies, since otherwise it will continue to be very difficult to achieve peace, especially in the Middle East, which is dealing with an increasing number of crises and conflicts. Peace cannot be achieved without cooperation and adherence to international law on the part of all of us.

In the context of supporting the efforts for the preparation of this meeting, the State of Qatar hosted the regional consultations on sustaining peace held in Doha in January, attended by the President of the General Assembly and with the participation of States, United Nations organs and regional and non-governmental organizations. The outcome of the consultations emphasized that sustainable peace is best achieved by addressing the root causes of conflicts. In that regard, the State of Qatar renews its support to the Secretary-General's efforts and initatives in the area of achieving peace through preventive diplomacy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Terens Nikolaos Quick, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Mr. Quick (Greece): Before I became a politician, I was a journalist. I remember that on one side was a pile of resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and on the other, a pile of war and tensions. Nothing has changed since then.

On behalf of the Hellenic Republic, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. It comes at a pivotal moment in time, when the sustainability of the rules-based global system is being continually threatened by a number of violent and protracted conflicts, as is evident in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and so forth — the pile I just mentioned. Those conflicts, driven by an array of overlapping factors — such as socioeconomic inequalities, the political and economic dominance of political or religious groups, conflict over natural resources and their distribution, unemployment and, very important, human rights violations — have immediate effects and severe long-term repercussions, not only for millions of forcibly displaced people but also for the host countries in their vicinity, undermining the rule of law and putting their economic and social cohesion to a serious test.

Against that backdrop, the concept of peacebuilding and sustaining peace offers the necessary tools and practical guidance for preventing all stages of armed conflict. Equally important, it can help to build the necessary consensus between the United Nations and its Member States for major reforms. As a member of the European Union (EU), Greece therefore aligns itself with the common EU position and welcomes the commitment to building and sustaining peace, as expressed in the Secretary-General's report (see A/72/707). In addition, in my national capacity, I would like to make the following four points regarding sustaining peace, particularly its implementation strategy.

First, prevention, together with an integrated approach to conflict and crisis management, should become our main tool. That means that we need to improve the ability of the United Nations to prevent conflicts from breaking out in the first place by addressing their underlying causes, and subsequently to deal with every stage from early action to stabilization, as well as ensuring its capacity to remain on the ground long enough for peace to take root rather than withdrawing after a few weeks or months.

Secondly, prevention also requires Member States to assume leadership and ensure that the United Nations system is given the trust and the operational, political and financial support that it needs. As a trusted stakeholder, the United Nations system, through a vertical and cross-cutting process, must develop the necessary strategic synergies with local, national and regional actors and deliver specific, country-focused strategies based on joint analysis, intelligence and the effective sharing of plans.

Thirdly, world peace is the business of everyone, even those who are not in this Hall today. It therefore cannot be achieved without parallel progress in the humanitarian actions of the United Nations and, most of all, without improvement in the records of Member States on issues such as democratic governance and the rule of law. In order to achieve sustaining peace, we need to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected and fully protected. Furthermore, Member States must give special emphasis to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to mitigate or eliminate over time factors such as poverty and economic exclusion, which give rise to conflict.

Last but not least, Greece considers that peacebuilding and sustaining peace is also about the substantive inclusion of women and young people in the process, both as members of United Nations missions and as civil-society activists. In the same context, we also advocate a policy of zero tolerance for violence and harassment for United Nations staff, especially where local populations of women and young people are concerned.

Besides conducting activities originated in the United Nations such as this high-level meeting, it is crucial to ensure that in conflict-sensitive areas such as ours — the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East — all regional actors embrace the importance of sustaining peace, reflecting the principles of our rules-based global system and refraining from violating their obligations under international law. Today I have heard many words about peace and seen tears shed when speakers talked about peace. But now is the time for those words and tears to give way to action, and to put into practice what is being expressed in words today. It is in that spirit that, from an idea conceived by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Nikos Kotzias, for the past two years Greece has been the initiator and host of the Rhodes Conference for Security and Stability, an informal ministerial meeting of countries of the wider eastern Mediterranean aimed at fostering stability and security in the region by promoting a positive agenda and mutual trust and understanding between participants. This year, the third Rhodes Conference, with the theme of "The spirit of Rhodes: shaping a positive agenda for stability and security", will take place on 21 and 22 June.

I want to conclude with two words that are very important tools for all of us working for peace. The first is "dialogue", which is diplomacy's main tool for pursuing peace. The second is "democracy", which is crucial to the maintenance of peace all over the world. As Greeks, we have the right to fight for them, because both dialogue and democracy are Greek words. Let us not forget that.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I would like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, for convening this high-level meeting on such a vital and pressing issue. We also commend the efforts of Lithuania and Bangladesh as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations leading to the finalization of draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted later by the Assembly.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), and I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

Significant efforts have been made and are under way to develop a more efficient and streamlined United Nations. Latvia welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and his focus on preventing conflicts before they arise by addressing the root causes of discontent and aggression. Conflict prevention is an effective tool for protecting those who need it most. Investing in prevention is a smart thing to do.

In order to ensure sustainable peace, we must include the protection and promotion of human rights in all aspects of peacebuilding, and the international community must make sure that the work of sustaining peace and development is conducted in full respect for international law and human rights.

Support for good governance, strong democratic institutions, the rule of law and inclusive economic development have always been priority areas for Latvia in its contribution to the implementation of sustainable development and sustaining peace, through projects ranging from water and waste management to e-governance and green technologies, connectivity and border control.

Women are disproportionately affected by conflict and should play a key role in achieving lasting peace. In that regard, I would like to highlight the long-standing commitment of the Latvian Government and Latvian non-governmental organizations to promoting women's empowerment by supporting other countries in their efforts to broaden economic opportunities for women and girls by ensuring access to education, preventing early marriage and reducing the risk of social exclusion and radicalization. Education is vital to addressing security challenges, tackling the risk of radicalization among young people and building resilient societies.

Latvia supports efforts to modernize the public sector of European Neighbourhood Policy nations and of countries in Central Asia and the Western Balkans by educating present and future public-service and civil-society leaders and sharing our experience in e-governance, civil-service reform, local governance and the fight against corruption.

While the United Nations plays a central role in coordinating and focusing efforts on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, regional mechanisms are essential to delivering sustainable development and preventing violent conflict in individual States. Latvian civilian experts are part of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, monitoring the fulfilment of peace agreements and facilitating peace and security in the conflict zones. Latvia is committed to assisting Georgia and Ukraine in recovering sustainably from the impact of their ongoing conflicts and building lasting peace.

As a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Latvia stands with the Government and the people of Iraq in their fight against international terrorism. We continue to train Iraqi security forces and are ready to provide expertise and financial support for reconstruction projects.

United Nations peacekeeping missions are useful political tools for preventing the escalation of existing conflicts and thereby laying the ground for sustaining peace. Latvia has taken part in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali since 2016 and has gradually increased its involvement as a practical contribution to peace and security.

All States Members of the United Nations are the guardians of this international system and of the Charter of the United Nations. Member States of the Security Council have a particular privilege and responsibility. With veto power also comes the responsibility to use that power in the interests of universal peace and security. Regrettably, when discussing the crisis in Syria, the Council has not always lived up to that special responsibility and has therefore hampered peacebuilding. More needs to be done. We need new, tailored strategies for sustaining peace. It is high time to pay more attention to prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Latvia fully supports the steps taken by the Secretary-General in that direction, and we see today's meeting as an important element in support of that change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ukraine appreciates the initiative of the President of the General Assembly in holding this meeting. We believe that this is the right time for Member States and the United Nations leadership to consider measures that can result in real change in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his views in the report (A/72/707), which we found very practical and forward-looking. We therefore support him in the work of implementing his proposed recommendations, particularly those aimed at strengthening the capacities of peacekeeping operations for sustaining peace, as well as those ensuring the broader involvement of women in peacebuilding activities. We are also encouraged by the Secretary-General's vision for reform of the peace and security pillar, based on the concept of the prevention of conflict. Preventive diplomacy is a major tool that the United Nations should deploy more often, drawing on the good offices of the Secretary-General and his mandated responsibility to draw the Security Council's attention to situations that could threaten international peace and security.

Our deliberations are taking place at a defining moment for the Organization. Despite the universal appeals for peace and our declared commitment to uphold it, wars and armed conflict remain a recurring feature of international affairs today. In regard to the prevention of conflicts and gross violations of human rights, the speed and determination of the United Nations are crucial. In Rwanda in 1994, the United Nations failed to react quickly in order to prevent genocide. In 2014, neither the leadership of the United Nations nor the members of the Security Council were able to stop Russia's military aggression and occupation of Crimea and Donbas.

However, despite all the justified criticism of the functioning of the United Nations, there is currently no alternative to it where safeguarding international peace and security is concerned. In recent years, the Organization has had some positive results. Its contribution to the cause of peace in Colombia and the success of its peacekeeping operation in Liberia should be carefully studied and the relevant best practices applied in other parts of the world. But the list of issues where our Organization could have put its huge potential to better use for peace is very long, and still includes the clear-cut security challenges that were the very reason for its emergence in the first place.

In Syria, a series of tragic events that includes the flagrant use of chemical weapons has been unfolding before our eyes. The individuals responsible for those actions have not been brought to justice, and Russia is still the only country on the Security Council that prefers to protect both the Al-Assad regime and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from accountability. While Russia was busy with that, Al-Assad knew he could act with impunity, and he did. Syria has continued to use chemical weapons against its own people. It has not declared or destroyed all of its chemical weapons, despite its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The threats posed by the chemical attacks in Syria and the United Kingdom represent a very serious challenge to the Organization itself as well as to the non-proliferation regime.

Impunity breeds only impunity. While shielding Russia's client Al-Assad for the past eight years, including by using the veto in the Security Council 12 times, Putin has also gone as far as launching an attack on Ukraine and attempting to annex part of our territory in the most blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations ever seen. The world has been witness to behaviour on the part of the Russian regime, whether in Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, the United Kingdom or elsewhere, that is unprecedented since the Second World War. It is a collection of aggressive attempts to rule the world without following civilized rules. That horrible chain of crimes must be eliminated. So far, impunity appears to be a decisive obstacle to the Organization's ability to address challenges to international peace and security. It is clear that long-overdue reforms must be implemented if it is to uphold its once unquestionable trustworthiness and restore its ability to take prompt preventive action.

Ever since the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was first established, it has been acknowledged that peacebuilding activities are intended to prevent armed conflicts rather than being limited to post-conflict assistance alone. We must look at peacebuilding more broadly and promote it with greater determination. We must take measures to discourage fragmented approaches. The Secretary-General's proposals in that regard are well in line with such an approach. Enabling countries to put in place effective and inclusive national and local mechanisms and institutions that can address the socioeconomic and political root causes and drivers of violent conflict must become a priority for the United Nations system, especially in the areas of promoting and protecting human rights and advocating a prominent role for women in all stages of peace consolidation.

Peacekeeping operations remain one of the most reliable and commonly used instruments in the Organization's toolbox for curbing conflicts and ensuring sustaining peace. While it is clear that much remains to be done if we are to bring United Nations peacekeeping up to speed and ensure that it can cope with the complexity of contemporary challenges, there are situations where there is no possibility of implementing political solutions to conflicts without the engagement of peacekeeping operations. For more than four years, the situation in and around my country has been an example of the non-utilization of the potential of United Nations peacekeeping. We stand ready to engage constructively at all levels to stop Russia's military aggression, establish lasting peace and restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. A peacekeeping operation under the auspices of the United Nations could be a decisive factor in that process, and we are devoutly hoping for further progress to be made on this crucial matter. While discussions in relevant forums on this issue are still under way, the Organization should be prepared to play its proper role in a future international mission in Ukraine.

In conclusion, after a lengthy debate in this Hall, it is clear that prevention must be at the core of sustaining peace activity. I would nevertheless like to ask some simple but legitimate questions. What has the United Nations done to prevent Russia from flouting the rule of law on a global as well as a regional level? And, more importantly, what exactly do we, as an international community, have to do in order to learn these sad lessons and improve the prospects of future generations?

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.

Mrs. Ribeiro (Portugal): I would like to start by thanking President Miroslav Lajčák for convening this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, providing us with an excellent opportunity to share best practices, discuss common challenges and reaffirm our commitment to building and sustaining peace in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

We are living in challenging and complex times. New forms of contemporary threats, most of them transnational, are increasingly threatening our stability and our pursuit of peace, development and prosperity. Climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, pandemics, terrorism, organized crime, cyberattacks and multiple forms of illicit trafficking — in human beings, human organs, weapons, narcotics and cultural goods — are only some of the challenges we are facing. Today more than ever, multilateralism is essential if we are to address the old and new threats to peace and security. History has shown us that we cannot fight them alone.

As we all know, ceasefires, peace agreements and elections do not necessarily imply that a sustainable peace has been finally achieved. Sustainable peace requires the international community's continued and unwavering attention. Post-conflict situations are times of great uncertainty and vulnerability, and transitions to peaceful political settlements are fragile moments when spoilers act and mobilize. There can be no question that successful peacebuilding and sustaining peace processes must be nationally owned. However, there have been several examples of failure when incipient democratic structures have been left to fend for themselves in the wake of political arrangements that are enforced rather than agreed on among the relevant stakeholders. Sustaining peace therefore requires increased international political vigilance and engagement. Peacebuilding is a long-term joint effort. We all know that peace can be achieved only if the root causes of conflicts, including underdevelopment and inequalities, are appropriately and comprehensively addressed.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the principles of conflict prevention, early warning, the primacy of politics, the resurgence of diplomacy and gender balance, as advocated by the Secretary-General. In order to deal with out complex contemporary challenges, we welcome and support his proposals for reform of the management, peace and security, and development strands of the United Nations system.

Portugal currently participates in seven United Nations peacekeeping missions and is committed to increasing its participation in future, as well as to working further on enhancing missions' interoperability. Whenever possible, peacekeeping operations should have a realistic and feasible exit strategy that should be implemented in parallel with the initial actions of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. That common endeavour will require more synergy and cooperation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The international community must also take into account social mechanisms and informal institutions and networks at the local level, where women, elders and young people can play an important role in enhancing their societies' resilience and supporting healing and reconciliation processes.

Regional arrangements also have an important role in sustaining peace. Here I would like to briefly mention resolution 71/324, adopted in September 2017, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, including in areas of critical importance for tackling the root causes of conflicts. We firmly believe that this resolution will strengthen the relationship, cooperation and complementarity between the two organizations in their pursuit of common values and in sustaining peace.

Peacebuilding is not State-building. However, although distinct from one another, they are unavoidably interlinked efforts. In that context, Portugal welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding (S/2018/43), which clearly identifies concrete actions for increasing, restructuring and better prioritizing the funding dedicated to United Nations peacebuilding activities. Predictable and sustainable funding is crucial to the success of the United Nations.

We look to the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, to further enhance its mechanisms for preventing conflicts. We call for strengthening its existing cooperation and dialogue with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the rest of the United Nations system, including the Peacebuilding Commission, in order to improve our collective capacity to prevent conflicts and sustain peace.

In conclusion, we must stay together and cooperate closely if we are to break the cycle of conflicts. We must endeavour to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violence. Our actions must always be guided by strict respect for the Charter of the United Nations, human rights and international law. We must recognize that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Only a universal organization such as the United Nations is in a position to adequately respond to that challenge and call for action. Portugal stands ready to be part of that effort and to cooperate with the whole system in fulfilling that noble objective.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yuri Sterk, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

Mr. Sterk (Bulgaria): Let me start by stating that Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/72/PV.83).

I would now like to add the following points in my national capacity.

With the adoption in 2016 of its resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the General Assembly recognized that the Organization should look at the whole cycle of a conflict rather than waiting until taking action is urgent. In that regard, Bulgaria welcomes the Secretary-General's approach, which places prevention and sustaining peace at the heart of his reform proposals and is aimed at making the United Nations peace and security pillar more coherent and effective.

For its part, Bulgaria is putting its shoulder to the wheel of the reforms by continuing to support United Nations prevention and mediation capacities. I am pleased to announce that my country has decided to make another contribution to the United Nations Mediation Trust Fund, which this time will be earmarked for United Nations activities in the Western Balkans. In that context, I would like to highlight that Bulgaria actively supports the irreversibility of the reforms that have been undertaken in the Western Balkans, which — together with the European perspective of the countries in the region and improved regional connectivity — are key drivers for lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

Bulgaria believes that the sustainability of peace requires an integrated approach, which can be implemented through stronger linkages between United Nations efforts in the areas of peace, development, human rights and humanitarian action. My country is a contributor to the operationalization of the humanitarian-development and peace-development nexuses. We have also continued to give financial support to United Nations humanitarian activities in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries.

With regard to the follow-up process established by draft resolution A/72/L.49, which we are about to adopt, we hope that in the forthcoming deliberations on recommendations and options for financing contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707), the General Assembly will maintain a comprehensive approach and will discuss all aspects of sustaining peace rather than one particular set of proposals.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Bulgaria will continue to contribute to further strengthening the peacebuilding architecture, prevention capacities and sustaining peace activities of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fernando Simas Magalhães, Under-Secretary for Multilateral Political Affairs, Europe and North America, of Brazil.

Mr. Simas Magalhães (Brazil): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at this high-level meeting. This is an occasion for following up on General Assembly resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and for continuing our discussion on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I would like to affirm Brazil's long-standing support to the peacebuilding efforts of the Organization. We were an active participant in the negotiations that created the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, and we were among the original members of the PBC Organizational Committee, elected in 2006. Brazil has also been the Chair of the country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau since its beginning in 2007. We will continue to help the people of Guinea-

Bissau in their peacebuilding efforts, including the preparations needed to ensure that the elections are held in accordance with the agreed calendar.

I would also like to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General in drafting his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). The comments and options that it presents deserve to be discussed in depth. The procedural draft resolution (A/72/L.49) to be adopted at this meeting will help us to move in that direction.

I would like to reiterate Brazil's long-standing support for the primacy of politics, conflict prevention and non-military approaches to the United Nations engagements in the field of peace and security. Those elements are crucial to achieving the goal of embracing a more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding at every stage of a conflict, including prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery. We therefore favour considering the three pillars of the United Nations as intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. At the same time, we also want to emphasize that in implementing sustaining peace we should not merge those pillars or mix the mandates of the existing United Nations bodies and entities, but rather focus on how to make the existing mandates work more efficiently.

The Secretary-General's report also established a relation between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has been said on more than one occasion in this Hall that development is the best defence against the possibility of conflicts breaking out, and that is perfectly true. Nevertheless, we should point out that some of the recommendations in the report, especially those related to policy coherence and the role of the resident coordinators in prevention and in helping to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, tend to concentrate only on the role of developing countries. Brazil believes that it is essential to avoid making false correlations between poverty and conflict. Conflict prevention is not a task for the developing world alone, as the current tensions in various parts of the world clearly demonstrate. We should not forget that 72 years ago the Organization was created in the aftermath of a destructive conflict between what were the world's most developed countries at the time.

In conclusion, the concept of sustaining peace is a new one, and this high-level meeting will help us discuss how to better understand it and put it into practice. But implementing it is not just a task for the United Nations and its Member States. To do that, we have to bring together a variety of strategic partners. We must reinforce our cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Only through the joint efforts of all of those actors will we be able to achieve our common goal of a peaceful world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Katerina Sequensova, Junior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs for Security and Multilateral Issues of the Czech Republic.

Ms. Sequensova (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83). I would also like to highlight a few elements in my national capacity.

The Czech Republic welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), issued pursuant to the twin resolutions — General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We share and support the report's vision of forging common systems and capabilities across the United Nations aimed at consistently and adequately supporting Member States in their endeavours to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous nations, and in line with their commitments to leave no one behind. We also support the notion of putting sustained peace at the very centre of the United Nations activities across all three of its pillars, since we are all well aware that where there is no development or human rights, there can also be no peace, and where there is no peace, there can be no development or human rights. We greatly appreciate the commitment of the Secretary-General and that of the President of the General Assembly to conflict prevention. We commend the goal of facilitating better conflict prevention through balanced reforms of the peace and security pillar, development system and management of the United Nations.

United Nations assistance to Member States should be based on three elements — reinforcing national ownership of the processes involved, developing country-contextual responses and ensuring the effective delivery of results on the ground. Fostering cooperation with international, regional, subregional and national partners is crucial to positive results. Innovative partnerships with international and regional financial institutions can provide additional support, including new sources of financing. We also recognize and support the direct relationship between gender equality and conflict prevention. If we are to achieve the goals of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, we must robustly endorse women's full participation. The Czech Republic, as a long-term donor to the Peacebuilding Fund and a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, will continue to actively support United Nations efforts to reach the objectives of the sustained-peace concept.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Halebonoe Setsabi, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of Lesotho.

Mr. Setsabi (Lesotho): Allow me to begin by commending the President for convening this historic high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is our hope that this critical process of the review of the peace and security architecture, as called for in resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), will garner the necessary support for a meaningful and sustainable outcome.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Foreign Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/72/PV.83), and reaffirms Lesotho's commitment to promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with Article 2 and Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. We echo the view emphasized by NAM that the tools at the disposal of the United Nations system should be used in good faith and not for interfering in the internal affairs of Member States.

Today the world is facing myriad complex security challenges that have the potential to erode the achievements of the United Nations, particularly in the area of international peace and security. Given the complexity of the conflicts in the world today, we urge for closer cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies at both the strategic and operational levels.

The Kingdom of Lesotho can testify to the fact that closer cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies has contributed to successfully addressing the challenges of insecurity and instability. Since we last reported on the political and security situation in Lesotho, we are pleased to be able to inform the Assembly that the political and security situation in our country has improved. The Kingdom of Lesotho remains relatively peaceful and stable, which can be attributed to closer cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, the relevant subregional organization. The Government of Lesotho recently approved a road map for national reforms, including security-sector reform, developed in consultation with all national stakeholders and with technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme. It is our fervent hope that when the reforms are fully implemented, our Kingdom can enjoy sustainable peace and stability.

The State has primary responsibility for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, the involvement of other national stakeholders, including women and young people, is key. Sadly, in conflict situations, it is women and young people who bear the brunt of violence and exploitation, and we therefore call for their increased participation in peace processes, since it is critical not only to attaining and sustaining peace but also to achieving sustainable economic development. We also call for the involvement of other partners, such as regional and civil-society organizations and international financial institutions, so that they can share their insights and expertise in the areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Past experiences and current field operations show that more resources are being spent on responding to the outbreak of conflicts than on preventing them. That is clearly unsustainable. We therefore call for more resources to be directed towards helping Member States to build structures and systems that can sustain peace and aid development in order to prevent any escalation of conflicts in the first place. The lack of progress on reforming the Security Council will continue to be an obstacle to improving the peace and security architecture of the United Nations, whatever form that may take and whatever its intentions. We therefore reaffirm our call for Security Council reform. We look forward to having a Council that is more representative, democratic and responsive to imminent conflicts.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to acknowledge the role that the United Nations, regional and subregional bodies continue to play in working tirelessly to bring peace to conflict situations across the globe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gitesh Sarma, Secretary in the Ministry for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Sarma (India): I thank the President for arranging today's discussion on a high-priority issue.

Building peace and prosperity for all remains a major objective for the international community, and the United Nations has a significant role to play in helping countries achieve those goals collectively in our mutual interest. The Organization was itself born in the aftermath of a conflict on a global scale. The discourse on peace has therefore remained high on its agenda, and our understanding of why conflicts continue to persist around the world has also increased over time. While peacekeeping, the flagship activity of the United Nations, has been largely successful in containing inter-State conflict situations, its limitations in tackling chronic intra-State situations of armed conflict, despite large-scale deployments of troops and other resources, are obvious. The concept of peacebuilding, which has expanded the focus to post-conflict situations and led a decade or so ago to the establishment of a United Nations peacebuilding architecture, is struggling, owing to a lack of adequate funding that in turn betrays a lack of genuine political will.

The concept has evolved further with the adoption of the General Assembly and Security Council's landmark 2016 resolutions on sustaining peace (70/262 and 2282 (2016)). Sustaining peace requires a comprehensive understanding of the related challenges and the creation of opportunities through serious international efforts to ensure greater peace and prosperity. That is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which makes several useful suggestions on how to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in supporting Member State-led efforts, strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders and ensure predictable and sustainable funding for peacebuilding activities through the Peacebuilding Fund. We also welcome draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly on that issue, as it will demonstrate our collective commitment to moving forward in the direction of that important objective.

Concrete action on this issue will require a much greater commitment to making a much deeper and longer-term political engagement and investment, including financial contributions to activities that help to build and sustain peace. As is well known, the funds available for United Nations peacebuilding efforts do not amount to even 1 per cent of the annual budget for United Nations peacekeeping. In that context, we welcome the specific financing options presented by the Secretary-General in his report. They must be examined seriously in order to address the current funding levels, which continue to be very inadequate.

The importance of empowering women and young people and ensuring their participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and governance for sustaining peace is also becoming better understood. Increasing the institutional involvement of women in peacekeeping, conflict prevention and mediation and political processes is particularly important, and requires capacity- and institution-building at the ground level. In that context, the example of the multifaceted professionalism of the first-ever all-women formed police unit in the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which served as a role model in inspiring Liberian women to increase their own contribution, has been well recognized. We are proud that India deployed the unit as long ago as 2007. Similar examples would go a long way towards helping communities build and sustain peace.

In an interconnected global world, peace and security among nations are interlinked and can be ensured only through long-term, equitable sustainable development. That requires the spirit of the genuine global partnership reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 for an increasingly representative and equitable global governance system. For its part, India continues to expand its development partnership efforts with fellow developing countries in order to assist them in their sustainable development priorities. Last year we established an India-United Nations development partnership fund to further strengthen such efforts. Another recent example of building partnerships for achieving the SDGs and action on climate is the International Solar Alliance, which has already brought more than 60 countries together and seeks to make affordable clean energy available to millions, helping to create jobs and achieve better living standards.

The concept of sustaining peace requires the engagement of all the pillars of the United Nations. We appreciate the Secretary-General's focus on strengthening operational and policy coherence and improving capacity across the United Nations system. We hope that the ongoing deliberations on the comprehensive reform proposals that he has put forward will help the system deliver better on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. We look forward to working with all partners and playing a constructive role in pursuing the objective of achieving peace and prosperity for our peoples.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/72/PV.85

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Salarzai (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable everyone on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and to five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323, of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly, in particular during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read out a shorter version of their texts and to submit their full statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended, whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements. Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limits for statements so that all those inscribed on the list of speakers may be heard in a timely manner.

Mr. Arrocha Ruiz (Panama): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Human Security Network, a cross-regional network composed of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand, South Africa, as an observer, and my own country, Panama. The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that promotes the integration of the human-security approach into policies and programmes at the regional, national and international levels.

On behalf of the members of the Network, I would like to express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session for convening this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to take stock of efforts undertaken and opportunities to strengthen the work of the United Nations on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) and its bold proposals to enhance the coherence of international engagement in support of country-led efforts to build peaceful and resilient societies.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The Network advocates the concept of human security, which calls for a people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented approach to multidimensional challenges relating to peace and security, development and human rights. We believe the human security approach is a valuable tool for creating synergies among the pillars of the United Nations system, thereby driving a more integrated, strategic and coherent response across the United Nations system towards sustaining peace and sustainable development.

Human security has been at the core of two major shifts in the United Nations system — sustaining peace and sustainable development. The focus on people is crucial to the realization of those priorities. We therefore welcome the report's emphasis on people-centred approaches and the focus on prevention, addressing the root causes of crises and inclusive national ownership that accounts for the needs of marginalized segments of the population, including women and youth.

While we are encouraged by the discussions on prevention and sustaining peace, the Network remains concerned about the unacceptable levels of human suffering that are the result of the surge in violent conflicts in recent years. We note that the violence has become increasingly complex and intractable, affecting populations within countries as well as spilling across borders. The Network is engaging a broader range of actors and creating new dynamics that have significant implications for how we prevent violent conflict and build sustainable peace.

In that context, we believe the human security approach can be particularly useful in supporting Governments and the United Nations system in the design and implementation of policies and strategies that address the root causes of conflict, promote social integration and harmony, combat poverty and inequality and build more secure and sustainable environments, based on the participation and engagement of all sectors of society.

Emphasis should be placed on ensuring inclusion. We need greater recognition and support of women's full and effective participation in all stages of the conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation processes. Similarly, we must harness the energy and ideas of youth to bolster prevention efforts and to craft lasting peace that provides opportunities for all. A prevention-oriented approach that includes the strong promotion and protection of human rights is fundamental to addressing the underlying causes of threats that endanger prospects for peace, stability and development.

We must also be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its emphasis on building peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and are based on respect for human rights, effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions.

We continue to believe that all individuals and communities are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. We must make sure that the pledge the international community made to leave no one behind is fully implemented. Only in that manner will we be able to prevent conflict and sustain peace. We call for greater application of the human security approach to advance inclusive prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jonas Bering Liisberg, State Secretary for Foreign Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Liisberg (Denmark): Denmark welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

We are gathered here at a critical juncture in the history of the United Nations, where we must advance key reforms of the Organization to make it more effective in dealing with today's ever more complex threats and challenges to international peace and security, and where divisions and lack of trust among Member States hamper the ability of the United Nations to prevent conflict, stop atrocities, hold the perpetrators accountable and stabilize crisis-affected countries and regions. At stake is the legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations, and this high-level meeting is an important opportunity to come together and reinforce our shared commitment. The Government of Denmark will remain a strong partner of the United Nations.

Fortunately, what we have seen today and yesterday is strong testimony to the support of the Member States to the United Nations and to advancing a durable and concerted effort to build and sustain peace. It also attests to our collective and fundamental concern about the deteriorating global security situation. We hear a strong call from across the membership to reinvigorate and reform our multilateral rules-based order.

The sustaining peace concept provides a valuable framework for work on all three pillars of the United Nations system — peace and security, development and human rights. Translating it into action will require bold efforts, from the Secretary-General to the Security Council to the full spectrum of United Nations instruments and agencies. Denmark strongly supports the reform vision of the Secretary-General. The status quo is not acceptable if the United Nations is to remain relevant in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). We appreciate its sharp focus on the role of women and youth. We look forward to discussing its many constructive suggestions with other Member States, in particular on the way forward for reliable and stable financing of peacebuilding work.

We call on all Member States to invest more in our common multilateral framework for peace and security. Denmark has been a long-standing supporter of United Nations efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, the Department of Political Affairs and peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, a central focus of Denmark's development and humanitarian strategy is promoting stability and supporting the most vulnerable in fragile situations, working through the key United Nations agencies on the ground, with a strong emphasis on forging a stronger development, humanitarian and peace efforts nexus.

Human rights must remain at the core of our efforts towards preventing conflict and sustaining peace. Likewise, the violation of human rights often serves as an early-warning indicator of potential conflict. Denmark welcomes statements by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in which he calls for an extended and early focus on violations of human rights. As the High Commissioner so rightfully stated in February at the Human Rights Council,

> "After all, the first tear in the fabric of peace often begins with a separation of the first few fibres".

Let me conclude by stressing that we will not succeed in sustaining peace without a sharp focus on human rights and the core values on which the Organization is built. An essential cause of violence and extremism is a feeling of being left out and excluded from political processes and from economic life, a violation of human rights.

In his latest address to the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General correctly pointed out that perhaps the best prevention tool we have is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is crucial that the Secretariat continue to put human rights up front, and the protection of human rights in general at the heart of its prevention and peacebuilding efforts. As a candidate for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2019-2012, Denmark will continue to push for a sharp focus on human rights in the United Nations work on the maintenance of international peace and security. Let us advance this common agenda together.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Anne Sipiläinen, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland.

Ms. Sipiläinen (Finland): The delegation of Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

Sustaining peace is a core task of the United Nations. There should be no hesitation to mobilize the whole United Nations system to accomplish this robust task, with the backing of the United Nations membership. In 2016, we all endorsed the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to set the premises for sustaining peace. Now, two years later, we are able to make a reassessment of the achievements so far.

Sustaining peace flows through all three pillars of the United Nations. A comprehensive approach to sustaining peace is within the unique mandate of the United Nations, reinforced by our common determination to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. We must ensure that the United Nations has the necessary tools to tackle the different phases of conflict.

Finland fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to make the United Nations more adapted to respond in a more integrated way to what often are complex conflict situations. The broad concept of sustaining peace is therefore a guiding framework to overcome the silos. In their work, many parts of the United Nations system are already placing emphasis on better addressing crisis and conflict circumstances and on integrating a preventive approach. More joint efforts are called for in the field. The importance of human rights in that context is often overlooked. We wish to stress that the international human rights framework provides a critical foundation for sustaining peace.

The prospects for durable peace, sustainable development and prosperous societies are better if we all pay attention to the inclusion of the whole society. The inclusive approach to peacebuilding is necessary for the achievement of permanent results, and sustaining peace requires the involvement of all actors from various parts of society. That means youth, women and civil society. We need to mainstream the gender perspective in all pillars and to strengthen the protection of women and girls.

Finland just launched its third national action plan on women and peace and security, which incorporates new aspects of human security related to migration and refugee situations, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as violent extremism. The action plan reasserts once again that more inclusive processes contribute to more sustainable peace.

Conflict prevention and strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes is a cost-effective and life-saving tool for the United Nations. Finland believes that political solutions, mediation and dialogue should be at the forefront of the United Nations work. Strengthening the role of mediation has been one of Finland's key priorities at the United Nations.

Without sustainable peace there is no sustainable development. If a conflict escalates, human suffering is enormous. The costs of rebuilding a society are high. As the joint United Nations-World Bank study entitled *Pathways for Peace* has shown, prevention is cost-effective and pays off. Investing in inclusive prevention, with a people-centred approach, saves lives. Finland hopes to strengthen the United Nations through all its pillars — peace and security, development and human rights — to enable a better response in preventing violent conflicts. We know from our own history that healing, reconciliation and peacebuilding take time.

Lastly, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for this opportunity to discuss how we can sustain peace and prevent conflict in the future. This meeting helps us move a step further in the search for common ground, understanding and mutual respect. The United Nations is our common platform to share experiences, learn from the past and invigorate the efforts required for sustainable peace.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico): I take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace, an informal cross-regional group that brings together 40 Member States focused on deepening the dialogue and implementation of sustaining peace as a goal and a process.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the President of the General Assembly for their commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and for their continued support for deeper engagement with Member States on this issue.

The Group of Friends came together following the adoption of the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)). We have come a long way in the past two years in pursuit of a more inclusive and integrated approach to sustaining peace and addressing the root causes of conflict, instead of just responding to crises. Our Group expects that the concept of sustaining peace will continue to be implemented by Member States according to national ownership, priorities and strategies, as well as by the United Nations system, coherently across the three pillars.

We recognize that more has to be done to improve the coherence of the system, the conflict-prevention capacities, the field focus of the Organization, its use of partnerships and achieving sustainable funding. The adoption of the new draft procedural resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/L.49) will be a reflection of the commitment of Member States. We look forward to keeping the momentum going and to the mandated reports that the Secretary-General will present to Member States in order to take stock of, and further build upon, the implementation efforts of Member States and the United Nations system in peacebuilding and sustaining peace in support of the next review of the peacebuilding architecture, in 2030.

Mr. Brown (Liberia): For Liberia, the issues of sustaining peace and preventing conflict present more than an opportunity to debate. They allow us to summarize the present-day challenges with which our post-conflict nation is faced. For us, this is not a subject in abstraction; it is our reality. We therefore join others in commending both the President of the General

Assembly and the Secretary-General on this important undertaking, and feel compelled to use the time afforded us to both lament the growing concerns we feel over the escalating levels and difficulties of conflicts around the world today and acknowledge the duty we must share to address them. We are increasingly becoming witnesses to the harsh truth of the way we live together in our world — indeed, the truth that conflict anywhere threatens us everywhere.

That truth ought to remind us of the common-sense duty to support each other in preventing conflict, as opposed to managing the present-day human tragedies and economic losses that are certain to result therefrom and destined to affect all of us. This is a common-sense duty because conflict is costly, financially and emotionally, not just for the affected country that is a member of our world family, but for all of us. As if we needed further proof, the recent World Bank estimates of $5 billion and $70 billion of savings to an affected country and the international community at large by preventing conflict should be incentive enough to draw upon our collective ingenuity and resources to meaningfully invest in conflict prevention and alleviating human suffering and socioeconomic exclusion — the prime drivers of conflict.

We welcome the Secretary-General's call to scale up investment in conflict prevention. We thank him for his commitment to supporting Member States in their efforts to sustain peace and build resilient, prosperous and inclusive societies. In the same vein, my delegation lends our endorsement to his vision of strengthening the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office through the restructuring of the peace and security pillar, as well as enhancing the capacity of the peacebuilding mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The harsh truth, however, is that we are seeing a serious diminution of commitment to funding these needed important intervention tools, which have the flexibility to make immediate and profound impacts on the ground where it actually matters. Common sense tells us that peacebuilding is a more enduring and safer way to peacekeeping. No doubt, each Member State must continue to strive to address the drivers of conflict through its development plans, thereby creating inclusive policies designed to leave no one behind. But we in Liberia are increasingly coming to terms with the fact that for a post-conflict society struggling to consolidate its cherished peace, development plans and inclusive policies must necessarily be supported by the resources needed to yield a continuous flow of results.

We therefore agree on the need to increase support to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund by Member States and development partners. However, that ought not excuse the commitments of partners to the overall development support of the affected Member State, or the unlocking of private capital in development efforts. In that context, all sectors of society, regional bodies and the international community must be joined in one coordinated and mutually accountable effort led by the host country and supported by all to build and sustain peace.

In Liberia and many other conflict-affected countries, we have seen the resilience of ordinary people stretched to the breaking point, and yet we have endured. Imagine if we could catalyse such resilience into preventing conflicts. Imagine if we truly dedicated ourselves to the common sense of enabling people to dream and actually realize their chance at a better life. Imagine investing in roads and energy, hospitals and schools, rather than bullets and tanks. Rather than investing in how different we are, we could inspire investments in tolerance, into how, despite our superficial differences in race, religion, tribe and creed, deep inside we all yearn to be free, to live in peace and to wish the best for ourselves and our families. Imagine how we can use science and technology — yes, to spy on each other — but also to enrich lives and to improve learning and services in clinics and hospitals. Imagine we could actually leave a better world to our children than the one we inherited.

By seeking to prevent conflict and sustain peace, we do not delude ourselves. Although this sense may not seem common today, lest we forget, so too have many collective endeavours that have shifted the course of human history not seemed so common in sense. It is no doubt a longer and even more challenging path, but it is a better road for all humankind. This is the road on which Liberia is determined to tread. We continue to stabilize the political architecture of our country with increased commitments to democratic governance. And although we are challenged by the lack of resources, we are determined to accountably invest in the infrastructure by which all of our people will reap the dividend of peace and have their lives bettered: roads, power, health and education, as well as the empowerment of young people and women. We count on continued partnership with the international community in that regard.

Finally, we commend the United Nations and our development partners for agreeing to take this journey to sustaining our peace and preventing conflicts with us. Liberians are confident that our national development agenda — the pro-poor agenda — along with the Peacebuilding Plan for Liberia and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, will be enduring frameworks not only for our ongoing partnerships, but also for realizing our shared commitment to continuing to build a more peaceful and inclusive society. For Liberia, this is common sense.

Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lajčák, for holding this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This meeting is timely and crucial because the stakes have never been higher — and the danger to peace never greater — than today.

Secretary-General Guterres delivered the most alarming warning two weeks ago whe he talked about chaos in the Middle East, which, as he said, has become a threat to peace and security (see S/PV.8231). In this volatile world one might ask what can be done to sustain peace when all the roads to peace are blocked. The answer is to go back to basics, to commit ourselves to the principles of the United Nations set forth in its Charter, which defines the Organization's mission as "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". One of the most courageous leaders of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, put it simply: the United Nations "was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell".

The United Nations has expressed its will and acted to sustain peace over the past few years through a process of commitment and reform. But to save humanity from hell, what is needed today is peacemakers. The disrupters are many and loud, while the peacemakers are few and timid. Each one of us needs to act for peace, to be bold and loud and to flood every space available, especially cyberspace, with this message and drown out the message of hatred, oppression and incitement.

What more can be done to sustain peace? Lebanon supports the Secretary-General's vision and agrees with his call to renew the focus on conflict prevention and the role of peace operations and peacekeeping missions in preventing conflicts. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in south Lebanon is a good example of that vision, and we are grateful to the mission. But peacekeeping is not an alternative to peace. There is a need to address the root causes of conflicts, especially ending occupation, hegemony, inequality and exclusion, and strengthening the rule of law.

The Lebanese Government is committed to sustaining peace. It works on many fronts to make this concept a reality. The Lebanese Government very recently adopted a national strategy for preventing violent extremism. The Government has introduced economic plans to create jobs for young people and give them hope for the future. Education is another area in which the Lebanese State believes it is important to invest; it is an investment in sustaining peace because education will help new generations to be better equipped to join the job market, but also to believe in peace.

Sustaining peace is also about promoting a culture of peace. I am proud to note that Lebanon learned lessons from its many painful experiences of war, but the most important lesson is the power of dialogue. Lebanon is a living model for constructive dialogue among the various religions and cultures. The late Pope John Paul II described Lebanon as a message.

It is against that backdrop that our President, General Michel Aoun, proposed before the General Assembly last September that Lebanon become a permanent centre for dialogue among civilizations and religions, under the umbrella of the United Nations (see A/72/PV.11). We are ready to cooperate with the General Assembly on this issue to make this vision a reality.

In conclusion, I offer the words of former American President John F. Kennedy, when he talked about peace. He said,

> "I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children ... not merely peace in our time but peace for all time".

Was this young President a dreamer? If so, maybe we all are dreamers too, as John Lennon said. But I hope that someday the whole world will join us and be as one in peace.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Sustaining peace requires collective concerted efforts by the international community through the United Nations aimed at stepping up coordination and entrenching the principle of peace by building partnerships to achieve the shared goals of development, peace, stability and prosperity. More important, efforts must be made towards preventive diplomacy. It is important for conflicts not to break out in the first place, which may be done by resolving the root causes of crises. We emphasize the importance of United Nations efforts in that regard, including specifically mediation and development efforts, undertaken so as not to neglect certain issues, exclude anybody or leave anyone behind.

We believe that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an objective in and of itself. It must not have preconditions attached. We uphold a country's accountability and should respect national ownership and give due consideration to the priorities of countries, especially those afflicted by conflict. It is also important to stress the link between peace, security and development. In that regard, we wish to welcome the report (A/72/707) of the Secretary-General calling upon United Nations officials on the ground to analyse the situation and risks and translate that analysis into specific measures so as to strengthen the sustaining of peace agenda and conflict prevention.

We stress the importance of ensuring the participation of national leadership in all aspects of risk assessment by country teams, which should of course take into account the specific features of the society under consideration. We are living in an era that is very different from previous ones. The pace of change is swift. The United Nations needs to keep up with the pace of those changes by adopting innovative solutions that can enable us to tackle the challenges of our era.

In that context, we wish to pay tribute to the use of preventive diplomacy and its tools. We stress the importance of using them with all good intentions and not to exploit them to interfere in the internal affairs of other States. We emphasize that preventive measures must be multilateral and strictly adhere to the norms of domestic political agendas. It is incumbent upon us to implement them fully, in line with international law and while taking into account a country's priorities and national sovereignty.

The question of command and control at the United Nations level is of great importance. The Secretary-General mentioned that when he voiced the desire to boost the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the United Nations, be it on the ground or at Headquarters. We stress that accountability may be a difficult endeavour, especially in conflict-affected countries or countries emerging from conflict. When United Nations leaders are appointed to head existing mechanisms, it is very difficult to achieve accountability because those mechanisms are responsible for their being placed in their posts. The United Nations has a wealth of staff with a plethora of skills. I believe that the international community needs to optimally harness staff, while taking into consideration the importance of gender parity and balanced geographical representation, as well as ensure better follow-up and accountability.

We fully support the partnership for sustaining peace and favour further partnership with regional and international organizations. In that regard, we would mention the example of the African Union, whose partnership with the United Nations has been very fruitful, particularly in terms of peace and security and the involvement of women, young people and civil society in efforts to build and sustain peace, especially with respect to raising awareness in their societies through country teams and in conjunction with national authorities.

In conclusion, my country wishes to reiterate its wholehearted support for all of the reform efforts of the Secretary-General in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We hope that the future reports of the Secretary-General will encompass a view of the role of the media in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The media can play an important role in terms of raising awareness and with respect to explaining circumstances.

We would note that many conflicts and disputes have morphed into larger conflicts. We see in this a negative impact from the media, which requires the establishment of follow-up mechanisms to track hate speech and inflammatory rhetoric. It is important for there to be greater accountability, especially in the light of the fact that terrorist groups exploit the various forms of media, including social media, in order to disseminate their violent and hateful rhetoric. Civil-society organizations should also be engaged, as terrorists often use them as tools.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba endorses the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

We welcome the convening of this meeting, the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and his efforts to improve the work of the United Nations.

Cuba supports overcoming fragmentation and achieving United Nations system-wide coherence without altering the mandates and functions of its principal organs. We join the call for increased funding for United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities. Urgent decisions need to be taken to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained funding for such activities.

Achieving sustainable and lasting peace among nations depends upon a favourable international environment based on respect for multilateralism, international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on friendly and cooperative relations. The integrated reform of the Organization and its monetary and financial institutions, as well as a new international order that is more just, democratic and equitable, would also contribute to sustained peace.

Efforts to sustain peace will be thwarted if the threat and unilateral use of force against sovereign States, unilateral coercive measures, attempts to impose certain political systems and patterns of democracy, or intimidation and unequal trade continue. In Cuba's opinion, sustained peace requires the eradication of the root causes of conflicts, in particular the problems of social and economic development that affect many nations, among other reasons, through the imposition of irrational and unsustainable consumption and production patterns through exploitation and looting.

In that regard, we accord priority to and call for support for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, capacity-building in developing countries, equal access and technology transfer without discrimination, and the fulfilment of commitments and increased official development assistance, without preconditions. The United Nations must be willing and able to assist in those efforts, within the framework of the mandates and functions given to national Governments that request them, while respecting their national ownership and priorities, their sovereignty and political independence, and without interference in their internal affairs. Only in that way can it support, objectively and impartially, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like extend my thanks to the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to thank Bangladesh and Lithuania, the facilitators of the negotiations on the draft solution entitled "Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace" (A/72/L.49), which will be adopted at the final meeting. I would also like to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and his report on implementing the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, which puts prevention at the very heart of United Nations conflict-prevention efforts (A/72/707).

It is necessary to deal with the root causes of conflicts and to achieve progress in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, especially in the light of the increasing number of conflicts and the growing number of refugees and displaced persons in the world, as well as the expansion in military spending, which is now at the highest level since the end of the Cold War. Ending conflicts is part and parcel of the development efforts and the humanitarian, diplomatic and security work of the United Nations. We reiterate that peacebuilding and sustaining peace is a priority for the entire world and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the right pathway for sustainable development because it is dedicated to conflict prevention. The 2030 Agenda is the main basis for building and sustaining peace, as it focuses on combating poverty, providing quality education to all and ensuring economic and social development.

Our purpose is to achieve peace and security and human dignity and justice. We should deal with the basic roots of conflicts, and we underscore that it is necessary, through our efforts and those of the Secretary-General, to enhance United Nations accountability. We must therefore strengthen trust in it, in particular through the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Jordan supports the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at coordination and cooperation through the United Nations country teams working in New York and in the field. We highlight the importance of national ownership and the financing needed to complete the high-priority projects of the countries in question. Jordan attaches great importance to the role of young people in sustaining peace and security, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), which Jordan submitted to the Council. The resolution confirms the role of young men and women in building peace, especially through early response and standing against violent extremism.

We believe that the role of women is very important because their participation is an important factor in reinforcing peace and security. It is also important to emphasize the role of women in peacebuilding operations and to increase their representation in all mechanisms and institutions related to conflict prevention and mediation processes, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. We must remove all obstacles to women's participation. Accordingly, Jordan has aligned the women and youth agenda with the sustainable development agenda in our national plan of action to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Together with Georgia, Jordan has launched a countering-extremism project that emphasizes supporting women and young people in combating violent extremism and reinforcing the role of women in conflict prevention; responding to crises and emergency situations; and building sustainable peace, with emphasis on the nexus between education and humanitarian and social sciences, the media and communications with the aim of preparing future generations to work for peace.

In the light of the increasing number of crises and conflicts, we find the importance of discussion and negotiation among civilizations and religious understanding to be essential. We have worked for more than 10 years in this area, which is reflected in our "Amman Message", "Common Word", "Amman and International Understanding Week" and "World Interfaith Harmony Week" initiatives, under the auspices of the United Nations and celebrated annually in the first week of February.

In the Middle East in particular, we have to understand that dealing with the basic causes of conflict will help us to avoid future negative consequences. In addition, our region will not enjoy peace and security as long as the Israeli occupation of Palestine has not ended. The Palestinian question is the key to stability in our region, and undoing the injustice being done to the Palestinian people is an international moral duty. Implementing political solutions will lead to the settlement of conflicts in our region. We must translate our efforts into reality so that the two-State solution will come to pass. We must help to establish a Palestinian State that is sovereign and viable, within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We must also step up our efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis so that we can support the aspirations of the Syrian people to peace. In addition, efforts should be made to achieve security and stability in Yemen, Libya and Iraq.

The inability to reach political settlements to the crises in the region is forcing countless civilians to leave their homes on a daily basis. Refugees need us. They need education, work and housing, and, more important, they need hope. Host countries must therefore make greater efforts to bring about peace and security and to improve refugees' standard of living.

Jordan hosts the most refugees of any country in the world. Despite our meagre financial and natural resources, we have welcomed a great number of refugees. In that connection, we have been facing unprecedented economic problems as a result of ongoing regional upheaval. Jordan is facing this challenge, which hampers sustainable development efforts, by devising innovative solutions to benefit both host countries and refugees. We hope that the international community will support our country in its efforts to build and sustain peace in the region.

The international community must continue to uphold the values of peace, justice, human rights and solidarity. We must pool our efforts to meet the world's security and sustainable development needs. We must rise above divisions and put an end to conflicts in order to alleviate human suffering. We must stand together in sustaining peace.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I would like to make three points.

First, national ownership lies at the heart of the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. In our effort to advance the 2030 Agenda and to support peace and development, we must have an appreciation for the unique domestic and regional context of each country. The United Nations works best when supporting national Governments in achieving national priorities. Only then can our efforts take root and become truly sustainable.

My second point relates to the importance of regional organizations. They can, and must, play an important role in fostering peace and development in a region. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Singapore has the honour to chair this year, has played a critical role in fostering peace and stability in South-East Asia since its founding, in 1967. South-East Asia is a diverse region with many cultures, languages and histories. ASEAN has been the foundation on which we have built 51 years of peace and stability across the region, and the centre of a wider regional architecture, including groupings such as ASEAN+3, the East Asia Summit and various dialogue partnerships. On the international stage, ASEAN works with the United Nations through the ASEAN-United Nations plan of action across multiple areas, including peacebuilding and development.

My third point is that Singapore supports the Secretary-General's goal of building a better United Nations that can effectively implement its mandates, including in peacebuilding and sustaining peace across the continuum. The reform of the United Nations must be focused on outcomes and making a real difference on the ground. Only then can the United Nations continue to be a credible champion for the cause of sustaining peace and the backbone of the multilateral system. In the words of the Secretary-General, that will require leadership, accountability and capacity. It is critical that the Secretariat and Member States alike take real ownership of the reform process. Singapore also welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to making accountability a fundamental part of the United Nations work.

As we demand more from the United Nations and ask for a more accountable, responsive and flexible United Nations, we must answer the Secretary-General's call to provide the Organization with the resources that it needs. Especially on the question of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, it is past time to look at how the peace continuum can be best supported by the financial and administrative structures that are currently in place.

It is not enough to support peace with our words. We must also do so through our actions.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

> "Sustaining peace and sustainable development for all are the shared aspiration of the people of the world and the lofty goal and mission of the United Nations. In recent years the United Nations peacebuilding architecture has energetically supported post-conflict nation-building, and played an important role in helping the countries concerned consolidate peace and strive for sustainable development.
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> "With regard to the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, I would like to make the following points.
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> "First, we must respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations. Sovereign equality is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Charter. In view of the differences among countries in terms of their national situations and levels of development, peacebuilding must respect the sovereignty, will and ownership of the countries concerned and be suited to their specific situations. Peacebuilding work must be geared towards the overarching goal of strengthening political and security institutions and development capacity with a focus on helping the countries concerned build capacity, strengthen conflict prevention and promote the transition to development and reconstruction.
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> "Secondly, we must give equal weight to development and security and eliminate the sources of conflict by addressing both its symptoms and root causes. The international community needs to establish a global governance concept based on extensive consultations, joint contributions and benefits-sharing; comprehensively advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and strengthen the global development partnership and fulfil assistance commitments to help developing countries improve the livelihoods of their people, explore paths of development best suited to their own conditions and increase their development capacities, thereby laying a solid foundation for sustainable peace and promoting sustainable peace through sustainable development.
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> "Thirdly, we should strengthen the United Nations system's integration and coordination capacity and deepen partnerships, including those with regional organizations. In carrying out their work in peacebuilding, the relevant United Nations organs must strictly follow their respective mandates in order to achieve synergy. It is important to leverage the comparative advantages of regional organizations, in particular by actively supporting the African Union in implementing its

African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap 2016-2020 and Agenda 2063, and encouraging regional organizations to play an active role in peacebuilding in their respective regions. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, should focus on supporting developing countries in achieving economic and social development, thereby eliminating poverty and other root causes of conflict.

"China firmly defends the international system with the United Nations at its core, resolutely safeguards the basic norms governing international relations, which are based on the purposes of principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and vigorously supports multilateralism. China is ready to share opportunities and the fruits of development with other countries and to provide more public goods for the realization of world peace, stability, development and prosperity.

"To that end, China is ready to work together with the international community to build a shared future for humankind and make further contributions to global peace and development."

Mr. Grant (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Despite that, we have not achieved this for the Syrian people, the Rohingya or communities in Iraq and Afghanistan, to name but a few. We must do better. We cannot forget about conflicts that do not make the headlines every day — South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Mali, for example. I would also note that Russia's illegal incursions into Crimea, in eastern Ukraine, and, before that, into Georgia have led to further instability and run counter to our common goal of building and sustaining peace. It is clear to us that, if we wish to better sustain peace, we also need to do start doing things differently. Allow me to emphasize four points that are particularly important to Canada.

First, on prevention, we fully agree with the Secretary-General and the conclusions of the report of the World Bank and the United Nations entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. It is imperative that the United Nations be better structured, better equipped and better supported to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and re-emergence of conflict. Conflict does not break out from one day to the next. It is often the result of decades of exclusion, failures in development or governance and non-respect for human rights. The Resident Coordinator system could play a greater role in ensuring that the United Nations better informs its development efforts through conflict risk analysis and integrate conflict-sensitive development principles into its country frameworks. Canada also calls for greater integration of human rights into the efforts of the United Nations system towards prevention, building on the important work of the Human Rights Up Front initiative.

(*spoke in English*)

Secondly, it is also clear that women must be given an opportunity to play a full and central role in sustaining peace. When women influence the processes that profoundly affect them, sustainable peace becomes far more likely. We commend the Peacebuilding Fund for exceeding the Secretary-General's 15 per cent target for women's empowerment projects. We welcome its decision to raise the target to 30 per cent under its new business plan.

My third point concerns the planning and execution of mission transitions and drawdowns. Those processes go to the heart of the ability of the United Nations to secure stability gains and investments and to reinforce objectives that can sustain peace and promote recovery and development. We have learned that effective transitions require broad consultation with national stakeholders and access to resources in order to ensure that long-term peacebuilding needs are addressed. We must ensure that mission transitions are deliberately designed to foster longer-term stability and, importantly, that there is an effective handover between the United Nations agencies dealing with peace and security and those that come under the development system. We must also make every effort to ensure that institutions that support the rule of law and policing are sufficiently resilient, accountable and sustainable to be able to play an effective role beyond the drawdown of the United Nations forces. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has an important role to play in supporting effective transition strategies. We commend the role that the PBC played in Liberia under Sweden's leadership as a model for future United Nations transitions.

Finally, we must turn to the issue of ensuring predictable and sustained financing for prevention and peacebuilding. Better coordination with other peacebuilding contributors, including United Nations agencies working across all pillars, international financial institutions and regional and bilateral partners and donors, is crucial. Donors also have a key role to play in addressing the fragmentation of United Nations financing for prevention and peacebuilding. By requesting joint analysis and by contributing to pooled and unearmarked funds, donors can powerfully incentivize coordinated and coherent United Nations peacebuilding efforts. We were pleased to see a range of ambitious financing options put forward in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707). We look forward to discussing them further.

We remain committed to the continued implementation of this important agenda. The Secretary-General has Canada's full support.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): It is an honour for my delegation to participate in this high-level meeting. We wish to thank the President for having convened it, as well as the Secretary-General for his very useful report (A/72/707).

Jamaica also wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83) and to offer the following additional comments.

First, we would concur with the argument that the focus on peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be couched in the long-term focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our efforts must be geared towards the greater good of ensuring that no one is left behind. The Government of Jamaica remains committed to playing its part in that regard and, from the outset, has implemented its own national development plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica, which is fully aligned with the SDGs. Sustaining peace is one of the core considerations in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Secondly, the case for greater coherence, in terms of both policy and operational coherence, cannot be overemphasized. It is important that at the level of the United Nations system, as well as at the national and regional levels, we continue to work to ensure that there is coherence in order to ensure that peace is not only maintained and restored but also cultivated.

Thirdly, Jamaica believes in the value of partnerships among the various networks and stakeholders in order to build and sustain peace. However, efforts in that regard will be meaningless without a simultaneous focus on identifying and responding to the root causes of conflict and the other factors that destabilize societies. Partnerships, including South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as interaction with regional and subregional organizations, must inform collective action going forward.

Fourthly, like other delegations, we also believe that the focus on youth, as well as the full participation of women, in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is critical. We would encourage continued efforts in that regard.

Fifthly, given the wide-ranging continuum of peace, Jamaica has long regarded peacekeeping as one of the key components of the United Nations effort to promote international peace and security. To that end, over the years we have contributed to United Nations peacekeeping missions through the deployment of police officers as well as civilian personnel.

From the beginning, Jamaica has also been supportive of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as an avenue through which the United Nations can promote a cohesive yet multidimensional response to post-conflict situations and comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding, development and institution-building. In keeping with that long-standing position, I wish to reiterate my delegation's commitment to supporting efforts to reform the peace and security architecture so as to ensure that the United Nations is able to respond to the peace and security threats and challenges that confront us as an international community.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened today's important meeting. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his very important report (A/72/707).

The adoption of two identical resolutions (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) began a new era for strengthening the coordination of United Nations efforts to build and sustain peace. The 10-year review of the peacebuilding architecture was a concerted and holistic approach to tackling interconnected emerging non-traditional challenges — in the areas of conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development — in order to ensure the practical implementation of the sustaining peace principle in the countries concerned.

I wish to emphasize that there is a great need to bring together a unified concept for sustaining peace among all States and eliminate any concerns regarding its interpretation. In order to address this phenomenon, it is first necessary to take into account the specificities of all countries and the national needs of each country. There is no single solution for all conflicts.

Secondly, building and sustaining peace in countries emerging from, or mired in, conflict requires that the root causes be dealt with — be they social, political or geostrategic dimensions. It is important to implement the various tools at the disposal of the United Nations in order to achieve a lasting settlement, not merely to settle for conflict management.

Thirdly, it is necessary to establish a vision for a single system of work within the Secretariat, in particular to support national efforts during political settlement and recovery in order to rebuild national institutions. This period is liable to last years and requires that the Organization tailor its tools in order to meet the needs and specific features of the countries and societies concerned, as well as to align them with the various stages of conflict.

Fourthly, efforts to build and sustain peace must issue from a vision of national ownership, the outcome of a holistic, unified vision of the future of a country and its priorities in terms of economic and social development, specifically recovery, the rebuilding of institutions and capacity-building, so as to ensure that States and societies can take ownership and lead such efforts. Women and young people must also be able to participate. It is necessary also to take into account the regional approach to sustaining peace, which is important to ensuring a comprehensive and complete recovery and a full assessment of the interdependent transnational challenges that many regions, including the Sahel, must face. Efforts to build effective partnerships with regional and subregional organizations are key to tackling those challenges. Hence it is important to reinforce existing partnerships with the African Union, the League of Arab States and other organizations in order to strengthen them so that those partnerships can be harnessed in line with national priorities.

Lastly, despite the progress made in the development of international tools to support the building and sustaining of peace since the establishment of the peacebuilding mechanism, in 2006, the nature and the scope of the challenges stemming from armed conflict require a renewal of political commitment. In order to make our tools more resolute and robust, it is important to allocate more financial and technical resources. For the resources to be more predictable, we must lend greater support to ensuring better coordination in the mandates, policies and programmes of States mired in or emerging from conflict. We reaffirm what is stated in the Secretary-General's report with regard to alternatives to proposed financing, specifically support for the Peacebuilding Fund.

We cherish the hope that Member States will arrive at an overall agreement with respect to the Secretary-General's reform proposal, which is important financial order or the Organization to be better positioned through the mandate of its bodies to achieve sustaining peace overall.

Mr. Chandrtri (Thailand): It has been almost two years since the adoption of the twin resolutions (Council resolution 2282 (2016) and Assembly resolution 70/262). We have established the notion of sustaining peace, whereby peace and security, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The agenda is still as relevant today as it was then.

I wish from the start to commend the President of the General Assembly for organizing this event, as well as for his active engagement with every region in preparation for this meeting in order to exchange views on how to achieve sustained peace. Thailand is also pleased that the Secretary-General has taken serious steps to echo such paradigm shifts in the restructuring of the Secretariat, along with peace and security pillar reforms and the restructuring of the development system — aligning all the three pillars closer together.

Financing for peacebuilding remains an outstanding issue. Thailand welcomes the budgetary options proposed in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707). While innovative proposals such as attracting funds from the private sector are worth exploring, the most sustainable and predictable source remains increasing assessed contributions. Redirecting unspent assessed contributions or savings from peacekeeping to peacebuilding could be a preferable start to reflect the shift in budget considerations from conflict response to conflict prevention. We take this opportunity to call on all Member States to support the agenda by fulfilling mandated financial contributions in order to ensure financing predictability for the whole United Nations system and avoid painful budget cuts in one agenda to finance another.

Another step forward might be setting up clear mandates and guidelines. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace stress the primary responsibility of national Governments and authorities, especially in non-mission settings where sustaining peace is essentially part and parcel of national plans to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. But the primacy of politics should not be an obstacle for the international community to act in a timely manner to prevent conflicts or mass atrocities. Our previous attempts, particularly on the responsibility to protect, eventually lost momentum as Member States interpreted the concept differently. We should seize this moment to concretize a substantive framework to address any interpretative complications and to implement measures for sustaining peace.

Ms. Khyne (Myanmar): I would like to thank the President for his dedicated work in organizing this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My delegation appreciates the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). We welcome the draft resolution (A/72/L.49) and the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Fund to support United Nations efforts to that end.

We are gathered here today to further strengthen our solidarity and collective efforts to achieve our common goal of a world of peace, progress and prosperity for all in this new era of global uncertainty and instability. Today we are witnessing a complex and shifting global security environment and unprecedented challenges in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We need to iterate the important nexus between achieving peace and realizing sustainable development. Conflicts and instability can have lasting impact on a country's development. Without peace, there can be no sustainable development or social justice. It is also true that there can be no lasting peace without the implementation of inclusive and sustainable development.

For Myanmar, which has endured seven decades of internal armed conflicts, nothing is more important than peace and stability. National reconciliation and peace are always at the top of our agenda of national priorities. The new President of Myanmar, Mr. Win Myint, has also reaffirmed their place at the top of the agenda of national priorities, along with the rule of law and socioeconomic development.

While recognizing peace as a prerequisite and enabler for development, we have revitalized the peace process with numerous ethnic armed groups to end internal armed conflicts. A new milestone in the direction of peace was made last February when two more ethnic armed groups came on board to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement, thereby bringing the total number of signatories to 10. The two Union Peace Conferences held so far also made some progress: despite complexity and challenges, 37 key principles were agreed upon for a future democratic federal union at the second session, held in May 2017. Dialogue is taking place, and the third session of the Conference is scheduled to be convened next month.

We have been trying to build peace out of internal strife, a peace that must be lasting and that must be accompanied by sustainable and equitable development. We would like to invite the international community to take part in this peace process so as to find lasting solutions to the problems that have plagued our country for decades.

Conflicts can be resolved through discussion and dialogue, through open-mindedness and the generosity and courage that enables us to see other people's point of view. It is through cooperation and understanding that our world can go forward. Hate and fear are the main scourges of our world. All conflicts arise out of either hate or fear. It is only by eliminating the sources of hate and fear that we will be able to end conflict from our country and world and build a better world for tomorrow.

I would like to conclude by expressing the sincere appreciation of the Government of Myanmar to all our friends around the world and to the United Nations for supporting the peace process in Myanmar. We look forward to the continued support and encouragement of the international community in our efforts to achieve lasting peace, sustainable development and democratic nation-building.

Mr. Dieng (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal thanks the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which will undoubtedly contribute to further reflection on the strategies and the measures that should enable us to meet the challenges of achieving lasting peace.

May I also congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres for his innovative vision of the reform and restructuring of the Organization. I also welcome the relevant recommendations contained in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

The significant progress made in implementing the recommendations of the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see A/69/968) and subsequent resolutions is both a measure of optimism and a source of encouragement in our efforts to advance the sustainable peace agenda. Although beneficial, that progress should not lead us to lose sight of the complexity of the challenges to be met, and the correct and sustainable grasp of which could be achieved only in the framework of innovative partnerships involving national actors; subregional, regional and international organizations; and financial and development institutions, with the aim of fostering the emergence of more cohesive, comprehensive and coherent strategies that can establish genuine foundations for lasting peace.

My delegation is pleased to note, in the light of the information contained in the report under review, that the Peacebuilding Commission has endorsed this new vision, as reflected both in its commitments to the countries on its agenda and in its initiatives on regional and cross-cutting issues. In that spirit, my delegation calls for additional initiatives to strengthen partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, given their effective contribution to conflict-prevention efforts.

Regular visits and exchanges between the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, some Chairs of country-specific configurations and several African Union officials, with a view to exploring ways to improve cooperation between the Commission and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa, are initiatives that should be stepped up. The same should be the case for debates on the regional, transboundary and transnational issues around peacebuilding in West Africa, as well as the issue of strengthening partnerships with such subregional organizations as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union.

Needless to say, the development of regional and local responses to crises, the conduct of joint assessments on the nature and challenges of peacebuilding in Africa, as well as an ongoing dialogue on how best to harmonize support for countries on the peacebuilding agenda are, among other things, actions that can increase the added value of such cooperation. The successful involvement of ECOWAS in the post-election crisis in the Gambia, and in several countries of the subregion, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and other regional and international partners, is quite illustrative of the appropriateness of that approach.

The delegation of Senegal welcomes the organization on 23 April of the high-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Gambia, in view of the international donors conference to be held on 22 May in Brussels. In that respect, I would like to stress the importance of maintaining and strengthening the support and backing of countries in the peacebuilding phase so that they can continue to benefit from the attention of the international community, in particular in terms of sustainable and predictable funding.

The challenges that these countries face in this context are enormous. Their needs in terms of assistance are equally huge, particularly in the areas of justice and security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the strengthening of health and education systems, economic recovery, support for agriculture and, above all, the creation of jobs for young people. That is why my delegation is of the view that these countries need considerable long-term funding. Unfortunately, that funding remains limited, irregular and at times very unpredictable. Senegal therefore calls on the international community and on the bilateral and multilateral partners of the Gambia to take part in the upcoming international donors conference and to make strong commitments that will allow the Gambia to return to the path of sustainable peace.

Mr. Rosselli Frieri (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus (see A/72/PV.84). I wish to make this statement in my national capacity as the Permanent Representative of Uruguay.

Uruguay agrees with the views expressed on several occasions by the Secretary-General that we must pay special attention to conflict prevention and focus on addressing the root causes of conflict. Nevertheless, we must implement the provisions of the identical resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on sustaining peace (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), adopted in 2016.

In that regard, Uruguay is gratified that the Organization is shifting from the paradigm of conflict prevention to that of sustaining peace as a goal and a process to build a shared societal view. That view encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, prolongation and recurrence of conflicts by addressing root causes and helping parties to a conflict put an end to hostilities with a view to achieving national reconciliation and making progress in recovery, rebuilding and development. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is fundamental to the implementation of the concept of sustaining peace. The realization of the SDGs is, without a doubt, a precondition for achieving lasting peace worldwide.

The reform of the peace and security pillar that the Secretary-General proposed in the framework of a broader reform process is essential to addressing systemic difficulties in sustaining peace. Uruguay attaches particular importance to strengthening institutions and national development in efforts to prevent the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflicts.

Having aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the members of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus, Uruguay also wishes to highlight the importance of promoting and protecting human rights as one of the fundamental pillars of the United Nations that cuts across the entire system. The close link between violations of human rights and emerging conflicts that can become threats to international peace and security is apparent to Uruguay. That is why we fully endorse the principle of placing human rights at the centre of conflict prevention.

Finally, I would like to conclude by noting the primary responsibility of sovereign States in achieving sustainable peace and leading the process that brings it about. That responsibility has two facets. The first is the responsibility of States as Members of the Organization to ensure that the system implements the provisions of the identical resolutions on sustaining peace and that it supports the reform of the Organization proposed by the Secretary-General, especially with regard to the peace and security pillar. The second facet is the primary responsibility of sovereign States, and particularly their leaders, to ensure peace within their borders and provide their peoples guarantees of better standards of life in larger freedom, as set forth in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): It is my great pleasure to address the General Assembly at this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Japan welcomes the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to build momentum through our discussions here.

Japan supports the Secretary-General's initiative to shift the balance of the peace and security activities of the United Nations from reacting to conflicts towards preventing them. Sustaining peace requires enhancing operational and policy coherence within the United Nations system and partnerships among all the relevant parties.

Japan believes that promoting human security is one key to building and sustaining peace. The human security approach is people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and focuses on prevention. It aims at protecting and empowering vulnerable individuals.

We seek to make a difference on the ground. To that end, there should be coherence in concrete actions by stakeholders. With that in mind, Japan supports a programme in Somalia, for example, which aims at addressing the root causes of conflict there by improving basic social services. That programme has been co-funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, and is now being implemented jointly by various actors. Japan believes that to be a good example of coherence.

Institution-building and human-resources development are also necessary to prevent a relapse into conflict. The core element of institution-building is to expand and consolidate national and local authorities throughout a country. Respecting national ownership is essential. Japan continues to focus on this topic in the Peacebuilding Commission, including cross-border issues, and will serve as a champion of institution-building.

Last but not least, financing is a factor critical to implementing and enhance peacebuilding activities and the sustaining peace agenda. I would like to briefly emphasize two points on strengthening the PBF. First, it is essential not only to increase the predictability of the budget of the PBF but also to maintain transparency and flexibility. Secondly, further efforts should be made to discover untapped resources for peacebuilding by strengthening partnerships between the private sector and international financial institutions. Sustaining peace will not be achieved without enhancing the role of women and youth as main actors. We welcome the fact that the PBF prioritizes that approach.

Now is the time to take actions that will make these principles a reality on the ground. Japan will spare no effort to achieve the sustaining peace agenda and propagate the culture of prevention in the field.

Mr. Cortorreal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a real pleasure for the delegation of the Dominican Republic to join previous speakers in sincerely congratulating the President on the convening of this significant high-level dialogue on the concept of sustainable peace. We hope that the important contributions made in the framework of this forum will have a real impact on the work of our Organization.

The Sustainable Development Goals have strengthened the consensus in the international community that security, peace and the rule of law are essential to sustainable development. The notion that security, development and the rule of law are closely linked has been discussed in the United Nations for a long time now. The interconnectivity among the Sustainable Development Goals implies that the Organization's peacebuilding work must be aligned with and supplement the work of every body and initiative that promotes social, economic and political development. The gaps between peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and development must be bridged and addressed as an ongoing process, so that all peoples, all over the world, can have the opportunity to achieve peace and prosperity.

If we are to talk about sustainable peace, we must address the root causes of conflict. We cannot talk seriously about promoting peace without tackling the factors that threaten it. Poverty, inequality and social exclusion exacerbate conflict. We know that when we promote economic development, we build resistance to the risks and vulnerabilities of fragile States. Peacebuilding should contribute to maximizing the opportunities for trade, investment and development. There is no question that such an effort requires the collective, coordinated and sustained backing of national actors and the international community with a view to supporting multidimensional strategies that address political, security and developmental aspects as a meaningful way to prevent the outbreak, escalation, prolongation and recurrence of conflicts.

The changing nature of conflicts calls for a new, robust, multidimensional strategy that combines peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development with climate-change mitigation. The Dominican Republic believes that we must take full consideration of the natural links between the challenges to peace and security faced by small island developing States and the maintenance of international peace and security. The classic and somewhat narrow concept of peace and security does not work for the multifaceted problems that small island developing States face. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges to such States' development aspirations and a threat to their own security and survival. We urge the international community to recognize the particular vulnerabilities of small developing States in order to develop coordinated action that can enable them to address security concerns comprehensively and coherently.

We believe that with this important debate represents a positive step, generating promising momentum for promoting a shift in perspective and creating new peacebuilding structures that can implement fundamental and specific tasks in the constantly evolving quest to build sustainable peace.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly, for convening this important meeting to discuss peace, one of the most critical pillars of the United Nations, under the agenda item of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered previously by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela on behalf of the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

Since 2011, when a transitional political process began in Yemen in the wake of the youth revolution in February of that year, the United Nations has played a critical role in facilitating Yemen's political transition, which has taken place in two stages. The first, from 2011 to 2014, began through the executive mechanism of an initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which led to the finalization of a draft constitution for the Republic of Yemen, based on the conclusions of our National Dialogue Conference. The second stage occurred in September 2014, when the Houthi militias turned against the institutions of the State and constitutional legitimacy, and it is still ongoing. The Secretary-General has appointed three Special Envoys on Yemen during that period. The latest, Mr. Martin Griffiths, was appointed in March to help continue the peace negotiations between the Yemeni Government and the rebels that were begun in Geneva in 2015 and resumed in Kuwait in 2016. Unfortunately, all of those consultations have collapsed and have failed to produce solutions to protect the Yemeni people, who are enduring terrible bloodshed and human suffering owing to the intransigent positions of the Houthi militias, which are supported by Iran, as the former Special Envoy on Yemen confirmed.

Yemen will continue to work for lasting peace in order to end this futile war, through political solutions based on the three reference points that have been agreed on — the Gulf initiative, the conclusions of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015). We want to restore our country's constitutional legitimacy and to rebuild State institutions and security in Yemen and the region. The Government of the Republic of Yemen is convinced that the price of conflict prevention is far less when peacebuilding is achieved. For that reason, it is important to prioritize, emphasize and secure the financing needed to implement preventive diplomacy to end conflicts worldwide. It is also important to implement multilateral diplomacy, to which the United Nations is central, and which has demonstrated its effectiveness and ability to safeguard the interests of all countries, including smaller ones. It is also crucial to strengthen the principles of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States and non-support for militias and other such parties within States, as well as ensure that foreign agents are not established within States. Those principles are all essential to enabling the achievement of peace and stability, and they apply, of course, to Iran's intervention in Yemen and the region, which must end.

The Republic of Yemen has played a key role in promoting international peace and security through its effective participation in peacekeeping operations since 2003, and there have been as many as 365 Yemenis deployed as military observers and police officers in various United Nations missions. We hope to soon resume that participation, which ended owing to the disastrous current situation in Yemen.

Over the past few years, the General Assembly and the Security Council have demonstrated their commitment to sustainable peace through the adoption of the respective twin resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), which affirm that sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of the Government and all national stakeholders. They also affirm that efforts to sustain peace are not only necessary and useful during conflict but also important before conflicts they occur, since they help to prevent outbreaks and address the root causes of conflict. In that regard, my country welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General with regard to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We appreciate the reform efforts of the Secretary-General and his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and its recommendations.

In conclusion, we wish this meeting every success. We hope that the desired results will be achieved.

Mr. Skinner-Klée Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by thanking the President and his team for organizing this high-level event on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, thereby implementing the identical resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016) of the General Assembly and the Security Council, which have provided a historic opportunity to achieve the main objective of the United Nations — peace. We understand that sustaining peace is simply part of an integral process of prevention that focuses on the well-being of the individual. It does not address political or military clashes alone. Clearly, it is especially important to intervene before the outbreak of a conflict, but intervention is also necessary during and after such outbreaks. Sustaining peace is today's concrete opportunity to make development work for peace and for the development of peoples, as well as to prevent disputes, eliminate exclusion and promote peaceful and stable coexistence.

I would like to share my country's experience of how we have been implementing a sustainable peace, even before the concept was adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Mr. Jimmy Morales, President of the Republic of Guatemala, during his participation in the high-level segment of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, said,

> "Guatemala, after 36 years of internal armed conflict, signed a peace agreement and took on the even more arduous task of peacebuilding. That conflict was conditioned by international ideological polarization engendered by political doctrines that are alien to us. Its aftermath weakened State institutions, preventing them from providing the necessary services to our people." (*A/72/PV.6, pp. 6-7*)

In its political and social maturity, Guatemala recognized the weakness inherent in proceeding alone and therefore turned to the United Nations. In our initiative we sought to strengthen the capacities of State institutions, particularly the justice sector and especially public administration. That not only demonstrates ownership by various sectors of the population, as well as the State itself; it has also strengthened our institutions and our citizens' trust in them. Sustaining peace has a direct relationship to the strengthening of institutions, security-sector reform and good governance. We are therefore strengthening our institutions and the rule of law. Citizens are participating more actively, calling for accountability and supporting the fight against corruption and impunity. That in turn shows that we are implementing the principle of inclusivity throughout various sectors of the population.

Another example of Guatemala's ongoing commitment to peacebuilding and achieving truly sustainable peace is the referendum held on 15 April on the territorial dispute with our sister State of Belize. In that democratic process, the people of Guatemala opted for a peaceful, democratic and lawful solution for resolving a territorial dispute that had lasted more than a century and a half, in order to ensure a prosperous future for both countries that guarantees territorial security and legal certainty and to preserve peaceful and friendly coexistence between both peoples.

We hosted the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, and as a result we can attest to the importance of breaking down silos not only among Departments of the Organization but also among national institutions and sectors, in order to promote greater effectiveness and efficiency when the Secretariat is implementing various mandates on the ground through the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office.

My delegation reiterates its firm conviction that there can be no peace or justice without development, and no development without peace and justice. In our experience, the pillars of peace and security, development and human rights must be addressed jointly and simultaneously, as a whole. We therefore emphasize the importance of overcoming the fragmented mindset that has prevailed among the three main pillars of the Organization. In that regard, Guatemala will work together with all Member States, including on the Secretary-General's efforts for possible reforms, with a view to achieving that objective and building a better world.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): I would like to thank the President for organizing this important and very timely high-level meeting to review the progress of the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), on the peacebuilding architecture and the related follow-up action.

Today, the world faces an increasing and unprecedented number of conflicts whose nature varies. The importance of peacebuilding has never been felt so keenly or intensely. Peacebuilding has evolved from its initial concept of mere reconstruction and rebuilding to encompass a wider canvas, including prevention, non-escalation and non-recurrence. We attach particular importance to the aspect of prevention, as emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707), before potential situations transform themselves into conflicts with a severe impact on human lives and resources. It is critically important to emphasize the aspects of national ownership and inclusivity in such processes. We have also come to recognize that maintaining peace in the long term is essential to building and strengthening societies recovering from conflict.

Sri Lanka has emerged from a long-drawn-out conflict. For the past three years, our Government has embarked on a process of peacebuilding and reconciliation, and we have undertaken many initiatives on truth-seeking, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. By addressing the hearts and minds of our people, we hope to realize our vision for a peaceful, united and prosperous country for all. Our path towards reconciliation and peacebuilding has not been easy. Along the way, we have faced many challenges that confront most free and democratic societies. We still have some way to go to achieve all our objectives, but we remain optimistic and hopeful for the future. We are acutely aware that, in our efforts for reconciliation and achieving long-lasting peace, it is essential that we engage with the international community and the United Nations. Sri Lanka deeply values the important contribution of the United Nations, most particularly through the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, to support Sri Lanka's journey towards reconciliation and a lasting peace.

The funding that Sri Lanka received from the Immediate Response Facility and the longer-term funding that has been made available to us for a number of areas, such as resettlement and technical advice and expertise to set up the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation and the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms, have been invaluable. What has proved for us most critical to our efforts has been to receive the right assistance at the right time. Through the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which was drafted with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), together with the Peacebuilding Board of Sri Lanka, the United Nations and the Government of Sri Lanka are working together as partners to identify areas that require assistance. The close coordination and consultations among the Government of Sri Lanka, the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office and the country team have been a hallmark of our interactions with the Organization. Our bilateral partners are also being brought into the process to avoid duplication.

Sri Lanka's example illustrates the importance of the sustained and predictable funding of the Peacebuilding Fund and the crucial need to further strengthen the Peacebuilding Support Office, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is imperative that the two issues of funding and strengthening the PBSO be given due priority and translated into practical action if the United Nations is to remain a viable contributor to the peacebuilding efforts of Member States in the future. Sri Lanka stands ready to support all initiatives in that regard.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate and thank the President of the General Assembly for having taken the initiative to convene this high-level event on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Today, the premises of the world that led to the birth of the United Nations have changed. Seventy-three years later, we need to reflect on the best way to rework the United Nations, its action and its soundness faced with the demands of the challenges of the contemporary world. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/707) and for his personal and resolute commitment to sustained peacebuilding.

In the context of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, it is important to adopt a consistent and coordinated approach to support countries in transition that face a wide range of multidimensional challenges that strike indiscriminately. As a result of persistent efforts, unforeseeable changes are beginning to emerge. They bring us a little closer to the noble goal that we all seek, namely, establishing peace as a cross-pillar issue as an end and a process. My delegation welcomes the adoption in 2006 of the twin resolutions 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2006) and the issuing of the recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. My country also welcomes the complementary efforts under way with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is a solution for the establishment of peace, security and sustained growth in general.

The work achieved to date as a result of the commitment of States can only contribute to the principle and ultimate goal of peace at all levels — prior to, during and following the outbreak of conflict. In that regard, Morocco supports the sacrosanct three-part concept, namely, the importance of national ownership and sovereignty, inclusivity and cooperation partnerships.

It is fitting to recall two truths that have been established during the debate at this high-level meeting. First, only a stronger United Nations can effectively help Member States to prevent conflicts and to maintain peace. Second is the need to prevent conflicts before their outbreak, which saves lives and safeguards the resilience of our societies. We must not lose sight of the fact that the reforms under way are not an end in themselves but should ensure stronger prevention, more agile mediation amd more effective peacekeeping operations.

The Kingdom of Morocco therefore spares no effort in promoting the principles of preventive diplomacy, which allows us to act pre-emptively and to truly contribute to strengthening the international peace and security architecture. Morocco strives to achieve such principles through the peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation in Africa, good offices and the establishment of a climate and culture of peace. Those are specific examples of measures for confidence-building and sustaining peace that bring people together and bear fruit.

My country is convinced that peace is an eternal cause, which is the primary responsibility of all States as stewards of all peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts on the ground. Since regaining its independence, Morocco has been actively participating in peace efforts at the international, multilateral, regional and national levels, as well as in the context of its South-South and triangular cooperation in support of requesting countries. That is particularly the case with brotherly and partner countries on the African continent, where Morocco hopes to create a space of co-prosperity for peace in all its forms and manifestations to set the stage for sustainable socioeconomic development and common well-being, since it must be recalled that there can be progress only if it is shared. Those principles prevailed during the election of Morocco to the Security Council in 1963 and 1992 during our engagement in peacekeeping operations and our chairmanship of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I wish to recall that, as part of our commitment to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, to date Morocco has deployed troops in several peacekeeping operations. More than 1,600 troops are currently deployed to maintain peace, and more than 60,000 soldiers have served under the banner of the United Nations.

For all countries, including mine, the convening of this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace bodes well for sending the clear message that the United Nations is ready to support States in transition and those that wish to help to implement the success story achieved and desired by countries emerging from crisis.

The Peacebuilding Commission does outstanding work through its important contribution to United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Beyond country configurations, it has sought to undertake other activities and to cooperate with new partners. My delegation therefore welcomes the contribution of the PBC acknowledged in the report of the Secretary-General and the more eminent role that it will be called on to assume in the new United Nations configuration, such as within the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. It is not by chance that the PBC has succeeded in establishing itself as a consultative credible body with great flexibility and the ability to adapt, upon which the Security Council will increasingly draw. I would like to take this opportunity, in the presence of the high-level officials in this Hall, to call on States to provide substantial and predictable financing through voluntary or assessed contributions. The Secretary-General's report includes a number of proposals and recommendations in that regard for our consideration.

In conclusion, I would like to take this historic opportunity to note that peace is a right, not a privilege, in a world where all conflicts, threats and crises are cross-border in nature. In that regard, the reform launched by the Secretary-General, today's high-level meeting and other processes, such as the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture planned for 2020, are part of an ongoing promising trend. It is incumbent on all of us — Member States and the international community — to deepen our discussion and find the right balance in order to demonstrate the political will and creativity we need to ensure that building and sustaining peace can become a concrete reality for every individual. As always, Morocco stands ready to support all joint initiatives and will provide assistance when it is requested.

Mr. Moustapha (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming this important high-level meeting and, at the same time, to congratulate the Secretary-General on the quality of his report on building and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and its pertinent recommendations. Chad welcomes the robust participation of States in this debate on sustaining and building peace, which, owing to the stakes involved, continues to be central to all our concerns. All the reforms envisaged, and those to come, have the quest for peace at their core — seeking, maintaining, strengthening and sustaining it.

Lasting peace has particular significance for many of our countries, because they have endured so much violence, which has undermined their foundations and resulted in painful hardships and countless sacrifices. Chad is one such country, whose territory has been the scene of unspeakable violence. Our current authorities, and the entire Chadian population, have had to make enormous efforts to break the cycle of violence, achieve peace, preserve cohesion and promote reconciliation, without which the temporary end of conflict is merely a perilous interlude that can enable a relapse into a worse crisis.

My country is striving to rebuild peace, but also to share it in its immediate neighbourhood with those who lack it. That is why we are making sacrifices by participating in various initiatives in the subregion aimed at combating cross-border crime, trafficking in drugs and humans, and groups that foment violent extremism. At the national level, maintaining the fragile peace requires as much if not more effort as it did to win it. Peacebuilding mechanisms have been put in place to maintain a spirit of dialogue and consultation. Whether through our national political dialogue committee, which brings together parties of the majority and the opposition, our reconciliation framework for farmers, our interreligious platform for peace or our association of traditional chiefdoms, we have explored all kinds of specific ways to preserve peace and build a peaceful society. In that regard, we commend the valuable support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, which remain committed to supporting the efforts of the Chadian Government and meeting the pressing financing needs of the local communities involved in prevention and mediation activities.

Based on a holistic approach to consolidating and sustaining peace, my country has established strengthening national unity as the first pillar of our 2030 Vision for the Chad we want. That guideline will enable us to fight social divisions and thereby help to strengthen peace among our people, without which our developing democratic environment would be weakened. To achieve that crucial objective, we will mobilize ethnic and religious diversity, our cultural and political dimensions and our human rights commitments. In order to launch that approach we held an inclusive national forum from 19 to 27 March, where participants not only reaffirmed their desire to live together in peace, but also voiced forceful new ideas for preserving the gains we have made. The prominent role played by young people and women in the forum resulted in the adoption of some 20 resolutions, committing the State to creating the conditions to enable those sectors, whose dynamism in prevention and mediation is evident at every level of national life, to participate more in decision-making. By making young people and women the major actors for Chad's future, the Government intends to make them more responsible, so that their creative genius leaves every citizen with a love of country and the will to live together and in peace.

Peace can be sustainable only if we tackle the root causes of conflict. In that regard, Chad welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to making the actions of our shared Organization more efficient. Of all the reforms envisaged by the Secretary-General to which my country once again gives its support, the reform concerning the repositioning of the United Nations development system is at the heart of our aspirations for peace. Poverty, exclusion and frustration form breeding grounds for every violent crisis, and we see that around Lake Chad and in the Sahel. We therefore call on Member States for greater commitment to implementing the reforms launched by the Secretary-General, so that lasting and predictable resources can be mobilized to curb vulnerability and poverty.

In conclusion, Chad reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's vision and will continue to work with ever greater effort in solidarity and complementarity in order to achieve peaceful, reconciled and determined societies working with confidence for the common good.

Ms. Cerrato (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks the President for organizing this high-level meeting, an opportunity for all States Members of the United Nations to commit to working together to achieve genuine peacebuilding, a goal that is so crucial to multilateralism. Honduras welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which includes proposals aimed at improving the effectiveness of the United Nations with regard to one of its fundamental mandates arising from the Charter, and we take note of its recommendations.

My country reiterates its support for the concept of sustainable peace, given our commitment to the promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law as a whole with the aim of helping to strengthening international peace and security. Peacekeeping operations have been an essential tool in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and of a climate of security. Given that they have been developing over time towards more holistic and multidisciplinary approaches, the need to reform the United Nations peace and security pillar so as to adapt it to the new realities has become a joint task.

Honduras agrees on a holistic approach to reform that takes into account the wishes of all women, men, young people, boys and girls in conflict-affected areas to find the peace of a better future. My delegation believes that, in order to make progress on the delicate and important task of achieving sustainable and lasting peace, we must first address the sources of instability to avoid conflicts before they start, by intensifying investment efforts and adopting new measures to prevent crises, which result in ever-greater human and financial losses. We must ensure the full participation of women in all sectors of society, and specifically in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. We must bolster cooperation among the different stakeholders and the search for synergies among international, regional and subregional organizations, since peace can be achieved and sustained only if everyone participates. Lastly, we must promote a culture of mediation in national, regional and international policies.

My delegation recognizes the important work being done by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations throughout the world and believes that preventive diplomacy and effective dialogue among the parties is the way most in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to prevent conflicts and achieve lasting peace.

Honduras supports the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Support Office so as to integrate peace and security with development and human rights, and ongoing assistance through the Peacebuilding Fund to help overcome barriers to social cohesion and develop a safer and more resilient society. In that regard, my country would like to express special thanks to the Secretary-General for his consideration and approval of the Tri-National Project for Resilience and Social Cohesion in Northern Central America, through the Peacebuilding Fund, which aims to address specific difficulties faced by women, children and adolescents by coordinating actions among the United Nations and the Governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to state that peace and development are interlinked. We cannot expect to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in circumstances of war, conflict and instability. Especially in these violent times, all Member States must find peaceful and satisfactory solutions to conflicts and disputes, act with moderation, refrain from the use of force or threat of force and strengthen cooperation among all countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Honduras reiterates its commitment to that great objective.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me begin by thanking the President for organizing and convening this high-level meeting.

As we all know, the peace and security landscape all across the world is plagued by mounting and complex challenges. Long-standing conflicts have intensified, while new dangers have emerged. In fundamental ways, we have gone in reverse rather than forward. This meeting is therefore an opportune moment to step back, take stock and review where we are and what needs to be done. While we all agree on the criticality of achieving and sustaining peace, we have not been able to translate that broad agreement into real progress on the ground, or indeed to evolve the necessary consensus on the steps we need to take next. We believe that sustained political processes should be at the core of our peace endeavours — processes that cover all phases of conflict, from prevention to escalation to avoidance of any relapse or regression.

The path towards durable peace begins with a clear understanding of the root causes and nature of conflict, and sustainable peace cannot be achieved until the underlying causes of conflict are fully addressed. They include poverty; foreign occupation, external interference and interventions, political and economic injustice; ethnic, tribal and religious tensions and also, increasingly, environmental degradation. In addition, the resolution of long-standing political disputes is critical.

We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707), with its added focus on prevention. He addresses some vital questions that have been raised in various forums since the adoption of the twin resolutions — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — on the peacebuilding architecture review in 2016. Those include the role of cross-pillar coordination within the United Nations system, options for predictable sources of funding for peacebuilding and the impact of the impending reform of various United Nations pillars on peacebuilding activities. Recommendations in the report provide us with a good basis to proceed. We believe that the following factors are vital for the success of our peacebuilding and sustaining-peace efforts.

First, we need a better understanding of the root causes of conflict and the ability to address them in our strategies. Secondly, we need greater coherence and synergy across the United Nations system and enhanced capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office to act as a hinge between the peace and security and other pillars of the United Nations system. Thirdly, we must devise regional strategies with the full participation of national actors. We strongly feel that sustaining peace initiatives should be locally owned, regionally anchored and internationally supported. Fourthly, we must recognize and support the pivotal role of women and youth in sustaining peace. Fifthly, we must restructure and better prioritize the funding needs for peacebuilding activities. The options provided by the Secretary-General therefore need to be very carefully considered.

Finally, building peace, as we all know, is hard work, but sustaining peace is even harder. Lasting peace cannot be imposed from the outside. It has to be built from within. What we need are capacities to provide early warning, address the root causes and include all stakeholders in trying to find comprehensive solutions.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for organizing this high-level meeting on the important issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Addressing that issue is the reason the Organization was founded more than 70 years ago. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his opening statement (see A/72/PV.83), which included a number of important elements in this regard.

This meeting shows, if it was still necessary to do so, how important peacebuilding and sustaining peace are, as provided for in the so-called twin draft resolutions (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)). This is of the greatest importance for many States Members of the United Nations, particularly those that are emerging from a conflict or those that are in the throes of conflict.

We therefore reaffirm and call for everybody to remember the concept of restoring peace, which began under the institutional plan in the late Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", which was published in 1992. At the time, the Secretary-General presented a vision of a United Nations with strengthened capacities for taking an integrated and global approach to ensuring international peace and security. It would begin with preventive diplomacy and the restoration of peace and peacekeeping until peace could be built, along the lines of a continuum, which is something that has been embraced and adopted by the United Nations since then.

The State of Kuwait very much appreciates the efforts of the current Secretary-General in terms of reform, particularly the reform of the peace and security pillars, given that they are intrinsically linked in the field. We therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General in this area (A/72/707).

The State of Kuwait urges the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.49, so that the Secretary-General can move forward in reviewing the peacebuilding provisions at the Assembly's seventy-fourth session, in 2020. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the facilitators of the negotiations to achieve a draft resolution, namely, the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania. We thank them for their efforts for an adoption by consensus of the draft resolution.

When we are discussing issues of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in this Hall, we need to discuss the Peacebuilding Commission, which was created by the Security Council and the General Assembly and is of the greatest importance for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. When it was created, it filled an important gap in the United Nations between emergency aid and development aid.

The foreign policy of the State of Kuwait is based upon a number of pillars, including preventive diplomacy, reconciliation and mediation, in order to prevent disputes from breaking out and contain them when they do. We have a dispute-settlement mechanism using solely peaceful methods. We fully believe that preventive diplomacy, reconciliation and mediation, if used appropriately, can prevent many conflicts from occurring.

What I have mentioned is in line with the Secretary-General's vision for the reform of the peace pillar, as provided for in his 2017 report on restructuring the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525). In the report, he shed light on a very important element, namely, that society must look at the root causes of conflict as well as at the need to prevent and contain conflicts before they break out through early prevention and reconciliation.

Mrs. Nguyen (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to the President for having convened this important meeting and setting out our priorities for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his enlightening remarks (see A.72/PV.83) and the valuable recommendations contained in his recent report (A/72/707).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries (see A.72/PV.83).

Our meeting takes place at a time when the world is facing unprecedented, complex and multifaceted challenges, including protracted armed conflicts, terrorism, refugee and migrant crises, inequality and exclusion, and increasing mistrust, which pose serious threats to international peace and security and severely undermine our efforts to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore high time for the United Nations to take a more holistic, integrated and people-centred approach to sustaining peace, with key priority given to conflict prevention, promotion of synergies and smooth transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding activities, with national ownership at the heart of those efforts. For that strategy to work, my delegation would like to make the following observations.

First, all disputes and conflicts must be resolved by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of States, and renouncing the threat or use of force. We believe that through multilateralism and strict compliance with international law, we could collectively address outstanding and emerging issues, promote mutual trust, and reduce the risk of negative ideologies, policies and actions. We call on the world's Powers to demonstrate their goodwill, shoulder their responsibilities and take the initiative in finding harmonious, equitable and long-lasting solutions to outstanding issues in the interest of all parties concerned, thereby creating a peaceful and stable environment.

Secondly, sustaining peace is possible only by addressing the root causes of conflicts and preventing the outbreak of and the relapse into conflicts. It is critical to develop and carry out comprehensive policies with concrete measures to help conflict-affected States, especially those vulnerable to crises, to enhance institutional capacity and good governance, advance economic development, and promote peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies.

Thirdly, equal, efficient and sustainable partnerships and cooperation among the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, national Governments and other diverse stakeholders, particularly women and youth, are essential for sustaining peace and sustainable development. To that end, at Viet Nam's initiative, in 2009 the Security Council adopted resolution 1889 (2009), on women and peace and security, calling for countries and international and regional communities to expand women's participation in all stages of conflict settlement and post-conflict reconstruction.

Fourthly, it is necessary to allocate adequate resources to implement the crucial peacebuilding and sustaining peace agendas. Financing for both should be sustained, predictable, long-term and well managed for effective and efficient impact on the ground. We welcome the Secretary-General's reports on the comprehensive reform of the United Nations system with concrete proposals to enhance the coherence, accountability and efficiency of peace operations, both at Headquarters and in field missions, to cost-effectively carry out its mandate and to better assist Member States in implementing their development priorities.

As a peace-loving country, Viet Nam has always been committed to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security. Together with other countries members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, we have been doing our utmost to build a South-East Asian region of peace, stability and prosperity. It is our consistent policy to settle all disputes, including the East Sea — also known as the South China Sea — by peaceful means, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to fully respect diplomatic and legal processes, and to refrain from the threat or use of force. We are now actively working towards the conclusion of the code of conduct of parties in the South China Sea.

Since 2014, Viet Nam has actively participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are now preparing for the deployment of a Level 2 hospital in South Sudan, in line with United Nations standards and requirements.

Achieving peace is not an end in itself. My delegation therefore strongly supports the draft resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be adopted later (A/72/L.49) and will work together with all partners to implement our agendas for peace and prosperity for all.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Mexico, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace, and of Turkey, on behalf of the MIKTA countries — Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia — respectively (see A/72/PV.83).

We wish to commend the President for his outstanding leadership in keeping alive the hard-won momentum on sustaining peace that was created by the twin resolutions we collectively adopted two years ago (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)). We also welcome the draft resolution that will be adopted at this high-level meeting in which we as Member States renew our strong commitment to keeping the torch of sustaining peace ablaze until it is firmly rooted across the United Nations system (A/72/L.49). Today I would like to highlight several key points that we believe deserve our due consideration in the pursuit of sustaining peace.

First, we need to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities across the peace continuum. The world has been making great strides towards sustainable development and peace, yet we continue to face increasingly complex challenges that require the United Nations to dramatically change its modus operandi towards prevention and sustaining peace. The Republic of Korea therefore strongly supports the leadership and vision of Secretary-General Guterres in pursuing reforms to overcome the deep-rooted fragmentation that exists across the United Nations system and promote a holistic, coherent approach that integrates the three pillars of the United Nations in a mutually reinforcing way. As we push forward with reforms, let us not forget the underlying spirit of the twin resolutions, namely, to build and sustain peace from the perspective of the local people who bear the brunt of global challenges.

Secondly, given the unprecedentedly complex nature of today's challenges, it has become of paramount importance that the United Nations work effectively with different partners, such as regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. That lies at the heart of the concept of sustaining peace. In fact, today many actors with financial resources, technology and expertise are increasingly showing interest in working with the United Nations. In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is well placed within the United Nations system to help build those partnerships by making full use of its unique convening power. That was the focus when the Republic of Korea chaired the Commission last year, as we helped to facilitate an agreement between the PBC and the World Bank to, inter alia, hold annual dialogues.

While the United Nations is making progress in building partnerships with international financial institutions and regional organizations such as the African Union, greater efforts should be made to work with the private sector and civil society. As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, the world already has the resources to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to sustain peace. The only question is how to connect the dots. The United Nations, which has a brand like no other, is best poised to convene those different actors.

And finally, I would like to take this opportunity to share with the General Assembly some key messages that came out of the Asian Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention, which my Government convened in Seoul last October with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Peacebuilding Support Office. While the diversity across Asia limits general observations on the peace and security dynamics in the region, there are rich experiences that can inform United Nations efforts towards prevention and sustaining peace.

First, while most large-scale armed conflicts have come to an end in Asia, subnational and low-intensity conflicts, which can have a devastating cumulative impact over time, persist across the region. Even in relatively peaceful societies, potentially destabilizing factors such as growing economic inequalities, exclusion and aggressive nationalism exist and need to be addressed.

Secondly, the growing politicization of ethnic and religious identities across Asia requires long-term peacebuilding strategies that address ethnic tensions and support identity politics in a way that promotes unity. The historical and cultural sensitivities of a country should be well understood when providing support for its peacebuilding priorities.

Thirdly, economic development and education are the main drivers for sustaining peace in many Asian countries. In the case of the Republic of Korea, in the aftermath of the Korean War in the early 1950s, more than two thirds of foreign aid was channelled to developing the domestic private sector. That unique public-private partnership was a key to Korea's rapid economic development and, in turn, to sustaining peace.

And finally, the peace process in Asia is marked by strong national ownership, while the United Nations is usually not in the lead. The United Nations should therefore identify its comparative advantage before engaging in the region and provide tailored support that builds on local capacities.

I hope that some of these messages can be adequately reflected in our collective efforts to build and sustain peace.

Ms. Domínguez Álvarez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Those who have taken the floor before us have spoken clearly about the new challenges we face, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and in the draft resolution to be adopted later in this high-level meeting (A/72/L.49) , and have shared a common vision on how to address them.

Chile understands that peace is a requirement for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and that, in turn, social inclusion and inclusive development are conditions for peace. We are pleased to see how we have moved towards a consensus on how the system should support both the Member States and civil society in building more just and peaceful societies. This long and sometimes frustrating process has been marked by significant milestones such as the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015; resolution 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security, in October 2015; resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, in December 2015; and the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on peacebuilding, in 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)).

This high-level meeting provides us with a further opportunity to move forward in consolidating this common vision through the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this debate. We cannot pass up the opportunity to mention these significant advances because of the contribution they represent to global well-being. In that regard, we reaffirm the importance of strengthening multilateralism around more coherent responses to global problems.

We know that sustaining peace is almost as difficult as achieving peace and that the absence of armed conflict does not mean that there is peace. The so-called traditional security threats have been largely replaced by new threats, non-State and non-military — wars and other transnational dangers such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering, arms trafficking, human trafficking, natural disasters, the spread of diseases and environmental degradation.

To understand and address those new challenges, we must adopt a multidimensional approach that addresses the underlying causes of those threats, including socioeconomic, ethnic, tribal, religious or ideological tensions that may have local, regional or global impacts. In that regard, we share the opinion of the Secretary-General that we need to invest much more in prevention. The United Nations should aim for a preventive approach, focusing on early identification of the processes of violence and their underlying conditions, rather than on management and response. As the President of the General Assembly has already said, the price of not doing so is too high and the effects of conflict too inhumane (see A/72/PV.83). Along with prevention, work on peacebuilding is particularly important, preventing countries that have overcome conflicts from relapsing into spirals of violence.

We hope that other processes currently under way in the Organization — reform of the development system, management reform, the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and a concrete and pragmatic reform of the Security Council — can contribute to forging an integrated and coherent response by the Organization so as to address the causes of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, promoting resilient societies through the implementation of joint strategies in the areas of development, human rights and the rule of law, and peace and security. Chile will continue to participate actively in those processes, fully aware of their potential to achieve the Organization's ambitious objectives.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.